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NAPOLEON AND THE COSSACKS

by

PETER NICOLAEVITCH KRASSNOFF

Translated from the Russian by

OLGA VITALI

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PART ONE

I.

In the region of St. Petersburg, in the spring, there is hardly any night. Daylight seems still to be shining when the clock stands at twelve. For hours the sky throbs with a diffused crimson light, gradually fading, in the west, to the sober blue of day, and kindling, in the east, to the conflagration of dawn.

At such an hour, a *kibitka,* or hooded carriage without springs, came rattling and clattering through the green approaches to the city. The great golden bowl of the sun had just come tilting over the earth's rim, pouring its flood into silver space. It hurt one's eyes to look.

The *yamstchik* driving the vehicle, turned round to his passenger, who, wrapped in the wide folds of a Caucasian *bourka,* sat awkwardly on the edge of the kibitka. "There!" he said, thrusting out a gnarled finger,—"That's St. Petersburg!"

The Cossack colonel Ivan Kouzmitch Minaieff looked in the direction indicated by the driver.

All was flat and green, neither marsh nor meadow, and bespattered with yellow dandelions. A grove of young birches, still downy with the foliage of May, stood transparent in the sun, throwing a blue lace of shadow on the ground. The road, running straight between rows of pollarded willows, dwindled away into the distance ahead; and there where it seemed to end, against hazy curtains of cloud white buildings stood out; spires thrust skywards needles of gold, chimney-tops, dark roofs, and domes appeared. Blurred spots became more distinct and emerged as gardens and islands of verdure. Then beyond them,—a silver mirror,—the bay gleamed in a malachite frame.

"Is that the sea?" Minaieff asked in a voice that sounded hoarse after a night spent without sleep.

"Aye, the sea it is. That's where the Neva goes to." The

driver stopped his team, climbed down from his box and re-adjusted the harness on one of the horses. Then, having lit a short pipe, he inquired:

"Doesn't your Honor allow yourself a smoke at times?"

"No," Minaieff answered drily.

"Hereabouts we have all taken to it. The *Tchoukhny* taught us. It's all Tchoukhny, as they call the Finnish peasants, around here now. The Russians will settle only close beside the highroads"

"The sea?" the Colonel mused, "—there's not much to say for it." He had seen many things in his life so much better than that The blue, blue sea at Kinburn, and at Varna, and those fine rivers, the White Bug and the blue Danube. Had he not, only last autumn, come down from the heights of the St. Gothard descending from the very skies, as it were, with the great Souvoroff himself. . . ? But Petersburg, no, he had not seen it as yet. So that was what it looked like!

Minaieff got out to straighten his cramped limbs. He gave a look under the hood of the kibitka. There, on a bedding of last year's hay, covered with a sheepskin and peacefully asleep, lay two boys,—his sons.

Kouzma,[1] the elder, slept on his side with his face in the shade. His heavy chestnut locks had spread out like a crown on the leather pillow. The younger, Ivan, had hair of a lighter shade. He slept lying on his back; in the gilding sunlight his chin looked as soft and round as a child's.

"Shall we go on?" asked the driver.

"You might drive slowly. I'll walk alongside. My legs are numb."

"That's because you were not comfortably seated. You'd better stretch out for a while."

"I have been lying more than enough."

"Lie down all the same. It's the truth I say. You just look at these youngsters. How they sleep, bless my heart! Your sons, I dare say?"

"Yes, they are my sons," Minaieff's voice rang with pride.

"Taking them to school, may be?"

[1] Russian for *Cosmo*.

"Yes, to school."

"That's fine . . . only. . . ."

The driver did not finish what he had intended to say. With a call of encouragement to his horses, he drove on.

At the station of Four Hands, where the highroad from Moscow met the one coming from Narva, horses were changed for the last time. Now there were no more bells on the harness; they were making ready for entering town. The new driver, too, was of a different type; the man looked gloomy and preoccupied, and he was sparing of words.

The children had awakened, and were peeping out of the hay like a couple of kittens. The traffic had increased. One-horse vehicles on high wheels were speeding along the soft track bordering the road. Peasant women with shawls on their shoulders and kerchiefs tied round their heads, sat in these vehicles, and behind them glistened tin milk-cans showing from under loose canvas covers. Heavy cart-loads of hay were crawling along in a file. Calves were being taken to market in carts; it was pitiful to hear their lowing and behold the dimness of their large eyes.

The striped arm of the turnpike barred the road. A sentinel in a tight gray garrison-coat, white breeches and gray gaiters, a cutlass in his black cross-belt, first presented, then ordered, arms and finally struck a bell.

On the watch-house platform, sheltered by high catkin-laden birch trees, a brass drum with both ends covered with calf-skin, blazed in the sun. A number of muskets stood there in a gun-rack. Sprawled out in heavy armchairs, the men of the watch were dozing.

At the sound of the bell, a dapper officer with a three-cornered German hat emerged from the watch-house. The side-curls and pigtail of his wig, profusely floured, were set on wires. He carried in his hand a stick. His clean-shaven, wrinkled face looked gray, whether with age or with the fatigue of a sleepless night, it was difficult to tell, as it also was im-

possible to see clearly what his rank was, or what were his years.

Minaieff threw off his bourka. His dark-green Cossack tunic, taken in at the waist with a scarf, showed the tarnished, twisted epaulets of a field-officer on its shoulders. Having surveyed from head to foot the tall dusty figure of the Colonel, the officer doffed his hat and, pointing with it towards the watch-house for an invitation to enter, said curtly:

"Your papers."

After a glance at the Colonel's relay permit, he threw it to a clerk who was sitting at a dusty table on which a crust of bread lay beside the ink-pot. The clerk took a pen from behind his ear and began to copy out the permit slowly into a large book.

"Do you come from the Don country?"

"I can hardly say where I come from," answered Minaieff, clearing his throat. "I am all the time on the move, from one campaign to another. At present I come from the Province of Pereyaslavl, from the estate of the widow of Admiral Oglob-lin. You may have heard of her? I am bringing my sons from there to St. Petersburg."

"I have not the honor of knowing her."

They were silent for a moment. Kouzma and Ivan stood behind their father, examining the watch-house with interest.

"What school are you taking them to?"

"The Shliakhetny Corps." [2]

"It is useless, sir. It is the wrong time for it. The reception of new pupils takes place in the autumn. Besides . . . you are a Cossack?"

"A Cossack from the Don country."

"It is useless, I say. The Corps is open only to the children of the nobility."

"But I have been a colonel for over five years.[3] I have the Cross of St. George."

"You are a colonel, but. . . ."

"What do you mean?"

[2] School for the children of the nobility.

[3] The rank of colonel conferred hereditary nobility in Russia.

"But you are a Cossack colonel. That is not taken into account here. There is not enough room for our own children."

"Am I not a Russian, then?"

"You are a Cossack." The officer moved his gray lips as though he were munching something, and then added:

"Have you any influential protectors?"

"I certainly have. I have thought and planned everything out very carefully. I have a benefactor here, Lieutenant-Colonel Alexei Petrovitch Yermoloff. We have served together. He is of good family and an educated man."

"And why do you suppose, Colonel, that this Yermoloff is at present in St. Petersburg?"

"I was told, when I passed through Moscow, that Lieutenant-Colonel Yermoloff had been called to St. Petersburg by order of the Emperor."

"Exactly so. Lieutenant-Colonel Yermoloff was conveyed, under the escort of a military courier, from Smolensk to St. Petersburg, and imprisoned in a casemate in the Alexéevsky ravelin of the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. And about three months ago, he passed this identical gate once more under escort, to take up his residence at the town of Kalouga."

"My God! What could he have done? He is only twenty-two years old. He was the most loyal of the Emperor's subjects. Think of it! Lieutenant-Colonel at twenty-two! I met him for the first time in Italy, four years ago. He was attached to the Austrian General Dewies. Yermoloff is a courteous and highly intelligent youth, as bold as a lion. I was told that he was at the head of an artillery company at Nesvij and acquitted himself brilliantly of his job. I wonder if anything happened there? I heard that his father, Peter Alexéevitch, formerly Prosecutor-General, got into some trouble or other. But that was his father, not he. And they served in different departments."

"One does not question the Emperor's will," the officer of the watch said, pompously.

Minaieff paced up and down the little office of the watch-house. "Well, I have another more influential protector and benefactor. A countryman of mine from the Don, Major-

General Matvei Ivanovitch Platoff.[4] He knows not only me, but what family I come from. He is a staid and sober man of about fifty. He has many orders and decorations and is even said to be received at Court."

"I am afraid that he will not be able to help you either. As far as I know, Platoff is also at Kalouga. He, too, was brought from the Fortress and passed this gate under escort like Yermoloff. I recollect that the relay-permit was for Kalouga"

"What can be happening? What can be happening?" Minaieff was greatly alarmed.

"It is the sacred will of our Sovereign," the officer answered dispassionately. "Here are your papers. Where are you putting up?"

"Wait a moment," said Minaieff. "If this has really happened to these two, I shall present myself before my chief benefactor and teacher, the Count Alexander Vassilievitch Souvoroff. He will not have forgotten me. It is not long since we carried the glorious Russian Eagle in triumph at Novi and on the heights of the Alps."

The officer looked attentively and seriously at the Cossack colonel. Was the man joking? Apparently not. He took off his three-cornered hat slowly and carefully, so as not to disarrange his curls, and made the sign of the cross.

"The Field-Marshal and Cavalier Alexander Vassilievitch Souvoroff departed this life on the sixth of this month."

"What!" exclaimed Minaieff, pulling his shako with an abrupt, involuntary gesture off his head, "Souvoroff dead?"

Without answering him, the officer rummaged among some papers, and, drawing forth a grayish scrap of *The St. Petersburg News,* read out loud:

"To-day, the 12th of May, at ten in the morning, will take place the bearing out of the body of his High Excellency Count Souvoroff from the house of Count Khvostoff, husband to his niece, which is situated on the Kriukov Canal, opposite the Belfry of the Church of St. Nicholas."

Minaieff was not listening to the officer. He was bowing

[4] Later Ataman of the Don Cossacks and favorite of the Emperor Alexander I.

and crossing himself before the icons. His sons were following his example. Then he silently took up his papers and turned to leave the office.

"Where do you intend to put up?" the officer called after him, repeating his former question.

"Where?" Minaieff stopped with a disconcerted air. "I think it will be best for me to go straight to the barracks of our Cossack Life-Guards Regiment. Someone will take me in there."

The officer followed him out of the watch-house and said to the driver:

"Take his Honor to the Alexandro-Nevsky Lavra to the barracks of the Cossack Regiment. Do you know them?"

"I do. I'll take him to the Cossacks on the Rojkov Field, beyond the Yamskaia suburb."

Ivan Kouzmitch got into the kibitka. His sons were questioning him, looking with curiosity at the cast-iron bulls in front of a large stone building with columns. But he paid no attention to them.

"Souvoroff is dead. . . . Souvoroff is dead," kept beating like a hammer in his brain.

II.

THE barracks of His Majesty's Cossack Life-Guards Regiment stretched in a row along the dusty and unpaved road. Behind them and their courtyards rose the red brick walls of the Alexandro-Nevsky Lavra, shaded by gardens which were just turning green. Everything reflected the vivid morning light of a day that promised to be hot. Clouds like shreds of discolored fleece were scattered over a blue sky.

Minaieff told the driver to stop, then walked to the gates.

A squadron was ranged behind the palings. A swarthy cavalry captain with a narrow Tartar moustache had just finished drill. He dismounted lightly and came to the gate.

The Captain looked in astonishment at the kibitka, from

under the hood of which two round, rosy faces were peeping out, and at the huge figure of the Cossack Colonel, sunburnt and dusty, who was advancing towards him like a bear to a lamb. Then each man introduced himself.

"Colonel Minaieff."

"Captain Elmourzin. What can I do for you?"

"Do not judge me severely, sir. I have come to you for help and advice. I lead a soldier's life. I have just arrived in the capital. I have never set eyes on the Emperor in the course of my long years of service, but I know that he is very strict. In order to avoid any mistake, I decided to take shelter with His Majesty's Cossacks. I am not acting thus out of interest, God forbid, but for safety."

"You are welcome, Colonel. Come, let us go indoors. We two can talk over everything there. Besides, it is time to take a bite. I have finished drill. Gentlemen officers, I invite you to breakfast," he cried through the gates.

"Will you allow my sons to come too?"

"By all means."

The room smelt of pine-wood and dogs. Two retrievers sniffed at Kouzma and Ivan and familiarly thrust their cold noses into the boys' hands.

"What am I to call you, sir?" asked Minaieff, glancing over the large, bright room with its many weapons hanging on a varicolored carpet on the wall. He felt rather shy of the little Captain. Immensely tall, broad-shouldered, strong, with a mane of hair streaked with gray, Minaieff felt awkward. He was a colonel, and the other was only a captain. But . . . as the officer in the guard-house had said, he was a colonel . . . but only a colonel of the Cossack field regiments. And Elmourzin was a captain of the Guards. The long habit of humbling himself before those in power asserted itself. From being a simple Cossack *ouriadnik*,[5] Minaieff had risen, through his service and courage, to the rank of field officer. He had attained it, but was still afraid of displeasing a powerful man or a man of quality. He was aware of this defect in his character, and had therefore decided to give his sons a good

[5] Sergeant.

education and let them serve in the Guards so that they, at least, should not meet that insulting *"But"* when they became colonels themselves.

"My name is Peter and my patronymic Ivanovitch. Tell me frankly if you have any need or request to lay before the Emperor. We shall all think it over together and try to arrange things. The officers of my squadron are good fellows. This is Lieutenant Affanassy Ossipovitch Grouzinoff and these are Cornets Alexei Nikolaevitch Popoff and Nikolai Ivanovitch Ilovaisky, and this is Ensign * Jmourin," said Elmourzin.

All were tall and handsome men dressed in short red summer jackets, and light blue riding-breeches; they wore boots with spurs, which clinked, exciting Kouzma's and Ivan's admiration.

"My business is a very simple one. I want my boys to enter a good school. But I have just heard at the town-gates that my benefactor, the Count Alexander Vassilievitch, is dead."

"Yes," Grouzinoff broke in. "The funeral is announced for to-day. Only the garrison troops are ordered to attend it. It appears that the Guards' regiment is wanted for the maneuvers." [6]

Grouzinoff looked meaningly at Minaieff as he said this but the Cossack colonel did not understand him.

"I should like to bid a last farewell to my benefactor and teacher, to go to his funeral, but I don't know what to do with the children," said Minaieff, pointing to his sons.

"That is easily arranged," Elmourzin said. "Our first and second squadron have gone to Livonia. There are several unoccupied rooms in their part of the barracks and you can put up there."

"No need for him to do that," said tall, dark-faced Grouzinoff. "Those rooms have not been heated for some time; they are cold and damp. They won't do for the children. Let

* An Army ensign was a young man who had passed his examination, but had not been promoted to officer.

[6] A hint at the disgrace into which Souvoroff had fallen shortly before his death.

him come to me. I've got two spare rooms, and my orderly will look after the Colonel and his boys."

"Capital!" said the Captain. "We'll have a cup of tea and something to eat, and then you can make yourself tidy. Meanwhile I will order the regimental *droshky* and it will take you to the funeral."

III.

They drove on a sandy road through a pine forest, passed a swamp and a line of tall fences, and came out on the Nevsky Prospect. The droshky rattled on the stone pavement. It had been quiet and solitary near the barracks, but here people were crowding on the boulevard and the wooden sidewalks. Closed carriages with a team of four or six horses stood in a file. There were people in the house porches, at the windows, on the roofs, everywhere. St. Petersburg was burying its Souvoroff.

Along the canal bank were grayish-blue rows of troops. Muskets were stacked by threes near the sidewalks. Behind them, the men were adjusting their pigtails and curls, brushing their gaiters, tightening their belts and shoulder-belts, on which hung short swords. On their flank, the musicians' drums, bugle-horns and hautboys glittered.

The road was blocked with carriages and foot-passengers. Minaieff's droshky advanced slowly in the file. Foreign ministers and ambassadors in elaborate uniform, senators, heads of Government departments in plumed hats, generals in caps or shakos with waving aigrettes, got out in front of a darkened house and entered it.

Minaieff followed the others up the stairs leading to the first floor.

The lid of the coffin, covered in crimson velvet with a general's gold galloon and heavy gold tassels, looked bodeful and grim as it stood near the door. A church cantor, wearing a black surplice trimmed with silver braid, was blowing on the embers in his censer. A thin man in a long black coat was questioning a stout one about the carriage of the Archbishop of

St. Petersburg which was to wait near the Kharlamov bridge. The stout man nodded his head so vehemently that his pigtail jumped up and down on his back, leaving white stripes of powder upon it.

"Do not worry," he said. "The coachman knows all about it and so does the Archbishop. The carriage will wait on the left side."

He looked askance at Minaieff who had begged him to let him pass, then stood aside with his back pressed to the stair-railing.

People were crowding in the vestibule where hung a large mirror curtained with black damask. A general was coughing loudly, reddening to his very neck. Near the window, choristers in long black kaftans were laying out music and discussing something. A man-servant carried a tray, with a silver tea-pot and two large cups of tea, through a door to the right. The central doors were open and led into a hall with a parquet floor. There was an acrid smell of fresh spruce, turpentine and burning spirits, mingled with a faintly perceptible odor of decay. This odor worried Minaieff. He was unable to associate it with the idea of *his* Souvoroff.

Minaieff was still unable to realize fully that Souvoroff was dead. It seemed as though his sharp, abrupt voice was about to resound, saying:

"Minaieff! Why, this is capital! You have brought your sons to school? One learned man is worth ten ignorant ones."

Instead of which a dreary, whispering silence and the faint, sweetish smell of a corpse came from the room where Souvoroff lay. Not the sharp, pungent and nauseating smell of a battlefield, but an insidious, cloying and penetrating one.

The vestibule and the room into which the tea had been carried were full of people. There was no one in the large, spacious hall; and in the further room, whence came the yellow mist of candlelight, there were only two generals and a figure in black standing in a corner in the shadow. Minaieff did not at once notice it as he tiptoed cautiously, as though afraid of waking someone who was asleep, into this room with its walls hung with black cloth and its white ceiling. A black catafalque stood there and on it, in a crimson coffin, lay Souvor-

off. Eighteen stools were set round the coffin and upon them, on velvet cushions, were shown the orders and insignia of the deceased. Here Minaieff saw the diamond bow, bestowed upon him by the Empress Catherine II for the taking of Ismail, the diamond feather for decorating his hat, which he had received for the capture of Rymnik, Souvoroff's sword, set with precious stones and his golden Field-Marshal's baton, studded with emeralds. Among the stars and orders lying on handsome ribbons, the Grand Order of Sardinia with its green ribbon and large diamond cross particularly attracted Minaieff's attention and remained in his memory, he could hardly say why. All the glitter of precious stones and gold, these cushions with the imperishable witnesses of the glory of a man who was already half decayed, all this was noticed and rapidly examined by him before he could take heart to raise his eyes to the face of the deceased.

Souvoroff lay dressed in his dark-green Field-Marshal's uniform and wearing the blue ribbon of the Order of St. Andrew. His features were calm. His wrinkles seemed to have disappeared and the white beard and moustache which had grown half an inch on his usually clean-shaven face, lent an unwonted appearance to his familiar countenance, now so solemn and important looking.

Minaieff went up the steps of the catafalque, made the sign of the cross and stood looking for a long time at the face of the deceased. Then he bent down, kissed one of the stiff, cold hands that lay folded on the breast and began to descend. As he did so, he felt that someone was attentively following him with his eyes out of a corner. He looked round. A man in a black coat and black silk breeches, with two large medals hanging at his neck, was looking fixedly at him. Minaieff stared at him hard, and recognized, in the sorrowful face with eyelids red and swollen with tears, the burlesque features of snub-nosed Proshka, Souvoroff's devoted waiting-man.

Minaieff's relations with Proshka were of a quite special nature and of very long date. They were perhaps not quite

correct from the point of view of discipline, Minaieff being a field officer and Proshka a serf. But such they had become in the course of the long years of war, campaigns and joint service under the orders of the Field-Marshal.

Minaieff had known Proshka as a brisk, sprightly boy sent from the country to help Souvoroff's orderly. Proshka in his turn remembered Minaieff as a smart, ever prompt eighteen-year-old ouriadnik racing on his yellow horse from one line of fire to the other by order of Souvoroff, carrying dispatches and letters. Souvoroff, Proshka, Minaieff and the serious, sedate old-believer [7] Cossack Seleznyoff, all formed one family in the field. Souvoroff was their father and they were his children. Souvoroff's word was gospel, even for the lazy and often intoxicated Proshka.

Many were the evenings they had spent together near Souvoroff's tent, sitting by the wood fire where soup or water for the General's tea was boiling in a cauldron.

Minaieff gradually rose from the ranks. His ouriadnik's shoulder-straps were replaced by the epaulets of a subaltern officer. But his relations to Proshka did not change, neither did Souvoroff's relations to all of them. Minaieff was still *Minaitch* [8] to him and Proshka remained Proshka. Years went by. Minaieff commanded a company and then a regiment. In peace time he was stationed on the Georgian frontier, but the moment there was a smell of powder in the air, Souvoroff called Minaitch to him and the elderly colonel and cavalier [9] once more met Proshka, now gray-haired, red-nosed and grumbling at his Field-Marshal, and treated him in the same friendly way.

Here, at the foot of Souvoroff's coffin, in this cold and stiff Petersburg house, among all the grandees and courtiers of both sexes assembled here to attend Souvoroff's funeral, Proshka's face, the only familiar one, seemed especially near and dear to

[7] Belonging to old form of Russian Orthodox Faith.

[8] A popular way of changing a surname used by simple people. Souvoroff liked such popular expressions.

[9] A *kavaler* or "cavalier" means in Russian a man who has an order or decoration of some kind.

Minaieff. It was as though there was still in it something of the man who was lying in his coffin.

Feeling his heart warm at the sight of him, Minaieff went up to Proshka.

"Come, your Honor," whispered Proshka.

Beyond the room where lay Souvoroff and which had apparently formerly been his bed-room, behind a low, hardly noticeable door, there was another, small and oblong room, impregnated with the odor inherent to Proshka. It smelt of lamp-oil, leather, saddle-cloths, boot-blacking, damp linen, charcoal, sheepskin and cheap tobacco. The narrow window looked out on the yellow brick wall of a building in the court-yard. A wooden bedstead stood against the wall. The bed had not been made. Above it, in a corner, was an apparently hurriedly set up image-case with the icons Souvoroff had carried about with him on his campaigns. Five wax candles fixed on a wooden board were burning before them. Saddles, horse-cloths and harness lay in a corner on the floor. A bottle of vodka, two heavy wine-glasses of yellowish cut glass, which Minaieff recognized as coming from Souvoroff's traveling luncheon-basket, and a tin plate with some slices of salt cucumber, stood on a small table covered at one end by a towel with embroidered borders.

"How was it? How did it all happen?" Minaieff asked, sitting down on a stool near the table.

Proshka took on his usual aggrieved and offended air.

"You will perhaps say, your Honor, that Proshka is to blame, that Proshka did not look after his master? As though it was ever possible to manage him? You know well enough how wilful he was. Had he listened to Proshka, he would never have left Kontchakskoye,[10] he would have gone on reading Psalms in church. That would have been better than fighting those rascallions of Frenchmen. But no! At his age, with his wounds, to go climbing the Italian mountains and wandering about in the snowdrifts! And ever on horseback. His left leg hurt him, his back ached at night, he would grind his

[10] Souvoroff's estate.

teeth as he turned over on his camp-bed. No one heard it, but Proshka did."

He wiped one of the wine-glasses with an end of the towel, poured some vodka into the glass and handed it to Minaieff.

"Drink, I beg you. To the repose of his soul!"

He watched silently while Minaieff, who was still tired after his journey and sleepless night, drank the vodka; then he went on:

"It began on that same St. Gothard, at the Devil's Bridge. The master tried to keep up bravely, but when the order came to leave, he felt very bad. 'Never yet, Proshka,' he said to me, 'has Souvoroff know what it is to retreat.' Some time after this he said: 'Well, it cannot be helped. Let us go home, Proshka.' I felt so sorry for him. *Home*. . . . He hardly knew what the word meant. He had spent his life in bivouacs and requisitioned houses. True, we had sometimes lived in palaces, as in Vienna or Milan, for instance; still, that was not home. Well, we started on our journey, about a week after you had left us. We went slowly, halting by the way, not as we were used to travel. My master's old wounds re-opened. He suffered from fever. We arrived here at the end of April, and did not know where to go. There was no home for him to go to. He had led a life of warfare for half a century, conquering kingdom after kingdom for Russia, but he had no house of his own. He was obliged to beg his nephew to take him in. Well, we took up our quarters here, and my master was laid up in bed. His mind was as clear as ever and he joked with me as usual, but he was very weak. He wished to get up every morning and ordered me to bring him his full-dress uniform. He wanted to present himself before the Emperor, to report on his arrival, to tell His Majesty all about the war and to abuse the Austrians. But he was unable to dress. He would sit up in bed, but had no strength for anything more. Well, my master asked his nephew to report to the Emperor that he begged him, in view of his old age, his many wounds and serious illness, to do him the favor of honoring him with a visit. But either they muddled up his report, or else a Field-Marshal, be it Souvoroff himself, dying Souvoroff, has no right to ask for such a favor.

His Majesty was displeased. . . . I heard a carriage stop at our door. The bell rang sharply in the hall. I thought it was the Emperor and ran to open the door. Count Koutaissoff [11] came in, wearing the scarlet uniform of the Order of Malta with a blue ribbon across his shoulder. 'Go and announce me to your master,' he said. I did so. 'All right,' said my master. 'Let him come in and don't leave the room.' Although he was so weak, I could see sparks in his eyes, as when he talked to the Germans and got angry with them. Count Koutaissoff came in. He looked very important and puffed up, and bowed stiffly, hardly bending his neck. My master sat up in bed and asked very politely, as though he did not recognize him or I had not announced him properly:

" 'Who are you, sir?'

" 'I am Count Koutaissoff.' "

Proshka rapidly swallowed a glass of vodka and began to impersonate his master and Count Koutaissoff, speaking with the exaggerated politeness of the former and the important air of the latter.

" 'Count Koutaissoff?. . . . Koutaissoff?. . . . I have not heard the name. I know that there is a Count Panin, a Count Vorontzoff, a Count Strogonoff, but I have not heard of a Count Koutaissoff. What may your rank be, sir?'

" 'I am Grand Equerry at the Court of His Majesty,' answered the visitor. He did not seem to understand what my master was driving at. It was not easy to understand my master and his disposition and his whims, as you know, your Honor.

" 'Grand Equerry? . . . Good. . . . And may I ask what you were before that?'

" 'Grand Master of the Hunt.'

" 'And before that?'

"The other was silent. He had grown very red in the face, —redder than his uniform.

" 'Well, will you not tell me, sir?' insisted my master.

" 'I was His Majesty's valet.'

[11] Favorite of the Emperor Paul. Formerly his valet and hairdresser.

"'Which means that you were barber and hair-dresser to His Majesty?'

"'Yes.'

"'Proshka!' cried my master. I was standing in a corner of the room near the window. 'Come here and look at this gentleman in a red coat and a blue ribbon. He was a menial like you are. But he is a Turk [12] and his religion forbids him to drink wine or spirits. See how high he has risen. He is a Count and he is sent to visit Souvoroff. But you are always drunk, so nothing will come of you. Make him your example, and you will become a grand gentleman yourself.'

"Koutaissoff turned round and vanished through the door. And my master got much worse after that."

"Proshka," said Minaieff. "How could all this have happened? You knew the Field-Marshal well. How could he have displeased the Emperor? You remember his telling us how he presented himself in St. Petersburg before His Majesty two years ago, before the Italian campaign? The Sovereign with his own hands hung about his neck the Cross of Grand Bailiff of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. The Field-Marshal kissed the Emperor's hand and knelt on one knee before him saying: 'God save the Tzar.' And His Majesty made him rise, embraced him and said: 'It is for you to save Tzars.'—Could all this be forgotten?"

"May be it isn't really forgotten. . . . May be it is just a mood," Proshka said in a low voice. "Come, your Honor, it is time for us to be going. The choristers are assembling. The body will soon be carried out."

The choristers were clearing their throats in the next room, which was now so full of people that Minaieff could hardly make his way through the crowd. The stools and tall candlesticks were removed from about the coffin. Its crimson and gold lid was being carried in through a fog of incense. Minaieff had once more to make an effort in order to realize that Souvoroff, whom he had just seen alive in his mind's eye, was that same white-bearded, dead stranger lying in a coffin on the catafalque.

[12] Koutaissoff was of Turkish origin.

IV.

MINISTERS, generals and dignitaries of the State were crowding round the coffin, now closed with the lid into which the screws were loosely driven. Red, black and gray uniforms and coats embroidered in gold and silver, varicolored ribbons, powdered wigs with pigtails, surrounded the crimson velvet coffin like a brilliant wreath. Its heavy gold tassels moved to and fro; the old men panted and got red in the face as they lifted the coffin.

The singing of the Archbishop's choir rose and fell in measured waves in the hall: "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal. . . ." The choristers moved onwards in front and the last words: . . . . "have Mercy upon us," came from the foot of the stair, together with a sudden whiff of fresh May morning air.

The coffin would not pass through the door of the hall.

"How is this, gentlemen? How did they carry it in?" Someone who was bending under the weight said in a loud and irritated voice:

"It was empty then and they carried it sideways, without the lid."

A man in a long black kaftan, who had appeared suddenly from somewhere, said hurriedly and respectfully:

"Allow us, your Excellency; we will lower it down from the balcony."

Men in black kaftans took hold of the coffin. The double glass folding-doors of the balcony were thrown open. Other men in heavy boots went clattering down the stairs to receive the coffin below. Long towels were slipped through the gilded bronze handles.

Minaieff looked down out of a window. The coffin inclined forward, wavering slightly, but was immediately seized by the men who were waiting in the street.

"Souvoroff never went every man's way," said a young officer who was standing beside Minaieff at the window.

Below was a rippling sea of bared heads, and men who made the sign of the cross. The balconies, roofs and house porches swarmed with people. All who had read about Souvoroff, all who had listened to the tales told of him in taverns, public-houses and shops, who had followed him in their thoughts across the Danube and over the Alps, who had taken Ismail and Prague and conquered Turkey and Poland with him, who had learned from his vivid, forcible words, always terse, yet wonderfully expressive and to the point, the unwritten science of conquest, who had heard for half a century of Souvoroff's victories,—all had come to see their Souvoroff to his last resting-place. He was dear to everyone, because everyone knew that Souvoroff was a Russian and had said aloud to the whole world:

"I am proud of being a Russian. Nothing could make me happier."

The road—Souvoroff's last march to his last bivouac—was strewn with fresh green spruce and ran in a straight line through the crowd.

Rows of garrison battalions, in uniforms of a grayish-blue, lined the route. The men held their muskets under the right arm, with bayonets lowered to the ground. The rattle of the drums, the trill of the fifes, the heartrending sounds of the trumpets playing *How glorious is God in Zion,* the sparkling ripples on the dark water of the canal, the ostrich feathers on the heads of the six horses which were almost entirely shrouded in black cloth, and the procession far ahead,—presented a strange mingling of earthly vanity and inexpressible sadness. Life expressed itself extravagantly as if to outdo this conquering death.

Officers in dress uniform: heavy Hessian boots or gray gaiters, tall pointed caps, three-cornered hats, shakos and helmets, carried Souvoroff's brilliant orders and insignia on velvet cushions. They were rounding the canal and coming out on the Sadovaia. They were followed by the Archbishop's choristers in mourning kaftans. Then came, two by two, the clergy of St. Pétersburg, then again choristers of the Imperial Court Chapel, and the clergy of the Court. The Archbishop

of St. Petersburg, the Bishop Evgueny and the members of the Theological Academy and of the Holy Synod, walked behind them. Officers in black capes led the horses of the hearse. The catafalque was of crimson velvet valanced with gold, with eight slender columns supporting golden angels. From these depended garlands of heavy cords metallic with gold thread. They almost hid the coffin from view by their heavy splendor.

Near the Kharlamoff bridge, the Archbishop of St. Petersburg got into a closed carriage with a team of six horses and two postillions, and drove rapidly ahead of the procession, to the Monastery, where he was to receive the deceased. The Bishop of Rostov took the Archbishop's place in the procession.

Minaieff, in his old and worn *tchekmen*,[13] walked in the crowd, listening to what all these people who were so near to and yet so far from his beloved Souvoroff were saying of him.

"It is astounding. Uncle's brain was quite lucid to the last moment. He joked with us as usual, and about death itself. Not long before the end, Gavrilo Romanovitch came to see him," said a man in a black coat.

"May I ask," respectfully interposed Minaieff, "who this Gavrilo Romanovitch is? Is he a relation of the deceased?"

"Derjavin," [14] the man answered curtly and in such a tone that Minaieff did not venture to confess that he did not know Mr. Derjavin. "Yes, as I was saying, Gavrilo Romanovitch came to see him and the Count began joking with him and said: 'Well, I am about to die. What epitaph will you put on my tomb?' 'I think,' said the poet, 'that many words are not needed: *Here lies Souvoroff,* will be enough.' The Count laughed and said to me: 'That's right—Mitiusha, do not engrave any poetry on my tomb. Just put: *Here lies Souvoroff.*'"

"Tell me about his last moments," Minaieff made bold to ask.

"He called me and told me to read to him his favorite 91st Psalm."

"Did you hear that Bortniansky [15] has set it to music?" said

[13] A long tunic of special Cossack cut.

[14] The first great Russian poet, the predecessor of Pushkin.

[15] A celebrated composer of religious music.

a man in a crimson coat, who was walking on the other side of Minaieff.

"Yes, I heard about it," replied the man in the black coat. "Well, I read the Psalm. Uncle grew very quiet. Then he raised himself on his elbow, looked about him with a clear glance and said calmly: 'I have long run after glory. But it is all vanity. I will find peace and rest at the Throne of the Almighty.' . . . and he died."

The procession, which had stopped to hear a requiem said on the parvis of a church on the way, now moved further on. The arcades of the *Gostiny Dvor*[16] stretched to the left, to the right was the stately building of the Imperial Public Library, with its immense many-paned windows.

"Do you know who is to preach the sermon over the coffin? Will it be His Grace the Bishop Evgueny, Professor of Philosophy at the Academy?" asked the man in the crimson coat.

"There will be no sermon. Instead of it the choristers of the Court will sing that same Psalm set to music by Bortniansky."

"Why will there be no sermon?"

"The Emperor. . ." said a man in a black civilian uniform in a frightened voice, rapidly taking off his hat.

"What about the Emperor? Has he forbidden the sermon?"

"The Emperor . . ." said the man in black civilian uniform in a low voice, indicating with his eyes the corner of the Imperial Public Library.

The drums began to beat in unison and the command of the chief of battalion sounded loudly, covering their rattle.

The Emperor Paul sat motionless on horseback at the corner of the Nevsky and the Sadovaia Street. He was mounted on a tall, stout black horse of Holstein breed, with a short plaited tail tied back at the stump with a bow, a heavy neck and a pointed nosed head tightly drawn in by the bit. He wore a

[16] A long open gallery with a row of shops. Literally: *Guests' Courtyard.* Merchants were called *guests* in ancient Russia. There was a Gostiny Dvor in every one of the old towns.

dark-gray uniform with a blue turn-down collar and the protruding bow of a white tie. This sober attire was set off by the blue ribbon of the Order of St. Andrew across the shoulder, the diamond Cross of the Order of Malta on his neck and two big stars on the left side of his chest. As the hearse approached, he took off his hat, and, holding it in his left hand together with the reins, repeatedly made the sign of the cross.

Minaieff passed quite close to the Emperor. Large tears were rolling down Paul's pale cheeks.

"God forgive those," thought Minaieff, "who stifled all feelings of clemency in this kind and noble man and instead aroused his passions." He recalled how respectfully the deceased had always spoken of the Emperor and of the Emperor's son. If Souvoroff himself had not judged the Emperor Paul, then no one had the right to judge him.

Minaieff looked about him. The procession was rounding the corner of the Nevsky Prospekt, and coming to the shade of the hanging garden of the Anitchkov Palace. The Emperor rode through the interstice between the first and the second battalion and further on through the crowd at a foot pace, wending his way towards the broad avenue of the Sadovaia Street. His hat was seen for a moment against the background of the pale foliage of birch trees, bobbing up and down as he swayed rhythmically in his saddle. Then he put his horse to a trot and rode off in the direction of the Mikhailovsky Palace.

The procession had already gone the greater part of the way and the mourners were tired. Drops of perspiration stood out on their brows. The day was sunny and hot, and they had walked for at least six miles. The lovely branches of the weeping birches hung over the walls of the Monastery. The church bells began to toll. Police stopped the people at the gates, letting only the officials and dignitaries pass in. The clergy were waiting near the Church of the Annunciation. The courtyard of the Lavra with its tall oaks, limes and birch trees and its few old buriel monuments, shut out the tumult of the streets. Only the voices of two soldiers, hurrying to remove the catafalque from the hearse, sounded very clear and distinct.

Once again, as in the house of Count Khvostoff, the senators

and generals surrounded the coffin, taking awkward hold of the handles and lifting it with the help of the men in black kaftans.

The coffin swayed as it entered the dark vestibule of the cathedral. The catafalque, borne aloft by the soldiers, swayed above it. It stuck in the entrance. The ornaments of the top caught at the vault and the sides got jammed against the walls. It would not go through The men who carried it could neither advance nor retreat.

"Gentlemen. . . . The coffin. . . . The coffin. . . . Wait! . . . The catafalque cannot pass."

"What?" cried a soldier with a bristle of gray beard on his unshaven chin. "It doesn't pass? Onward, boys! Souvoroff passed everywhere."

Something cracked, a golden cord was torn and hung over the coffin, and both catafalque and coffin passed through and were borne into the middle of the church.

The liturgy began.

Minaieff stood, his head bent in prayer. When the choristers chanted: *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High,* to music by Bortniansky, Minaieff felt tears rising to his eyes, which were dry and burning from the wind and the sleepless nights of the journey.

Yes! Whoever it was who had thought of replacing the sermon by this Psalm, sung by a wonderful choir, understood and loved Souvoroff indeed. Instead of cold and pompous human words full of earthly vanity, it seemed as though angels were waving their wings and singing over the coffin, revealing in their music the mystery which was Souvoroff.

"Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day. . . ."

Stern and at the same time meek and merciful were the features of the little old man with the bristle of gray beard who lay sunk deep in his coffin.

"A thousand shall fall at thy side and a thousand at thy right hand. . . ."

Visions of victories arose at the sound of these words, when he had gone out alone against ten and had cried to his soldiers: "Two are too few,—give us ten, we shall defeat them all and take them prisoners."

The sounds that soared to the vault revealed to him who lay motionless, rigid and dead, and to all the living in the cathedral, what it was that had made him so strong and his victories so invariable, because he had believed in it: "God is with us!"

The angels sang softly:

"The Lord is my refuge."

All those who had known Souvoroff and to whom he had been near and dear, and those who had known him only by hearsay, went up in a file to his coffin, bending over it to kiss his hand. Tears were streaming down their faces.

The Russians were taking leave of Russian glory, taking leave of Souvoroff.

"Look, there is Derjavin," someone whispered beside Minaieff. He glanced at the old man with a pigtail and curls who was kneeling and bowing to the ground before the coffin. He saw him rise with difficulty and step aside, burying his face in his hands.

The hammer began to beat heavily and rhythmically on the edge of the coffin lid, waking the echoes through the silent cathedral. Near one of the walls, where a long and narrow hole had been dug and the flags and bricks of the stone floor were lying beside it, the grave-diggers stood holding long towels in their hands.

Twelve big guns beyond the enclosure of the cathedral boomed forth solemnly, causing the walls to tremble and the windows to shake. They were answered by the fire of the garrison battalions.

"Dust thou wert, to dust returnest. . . ."

Lumps of red sand struck the lid and the sound was drowned by a new roar of guns and rattle of muskets.

Everything was over. Minaieff walked slowly along the wooden pavement to the gates of the Lavra. He had some difficulty in finding the regimental droshky in the crush of private carriages and *isvostchik* guitars.[17]

As he was getting into the droshky, the driver, a Cossack

[17] All vehicles for hire are called *isvostchiks* in Russia; the driver also bears the name. At this period the popular cab was shaped like a guitar.

of the Life-Guards, turned his round ruddy face towards him and said:

"We have buried the glory of Russia."

V.

BACK at barracks, Minaieff found Elmourzin and Grouzinoff together at home. His children, like two well-behaved boys, were sitting with a book in the next room and looking at pictures with Grouzinoff's orderly. A table was laid for Minaieff in a corner of the room.

"You must excuse us," said Elmourzin. "We have had dinner. You will be served immediately."

"Father," cried Kouzma, running out to meet the Colonel. "Was it for Souvoroff they fired the guns?"

"There were also muskets," said Vania.[18]

"Look here, children, go to your room. Don't bother your father," said Elmourzin. "Well," he went on, turning to Minaieff. "So Souvoroff has been buried? Was the Emperor at the funeral?"

"In a way he was and yet he was not. He put in a short appearance at the corner of the Nevsky. He waited just long enough for the coffin to pass."

Elmourzin frowned and bit his moustache, but did not say a word.

"Yes, Russia's glory is dead and buried," said Minaieff with a sigh.

"Never mind that," said Grouzinoff. "The world can never stay long without glory. At present it is the glory of the French that is in the ascendant. It is only honest to admit that. There was Frederick who made Prussia glorious. Then Russia's turn came with Souvoroff, and now France's star is rising,—Bonaparte."

Minaieff looked at Grouzinoff with displeasure.

"As to Frederick," he said didactically, "our Mother and

[18] Diminutive for Ivan (John).

Czaritza Elizaveta Petrovna had his glory buried in Berlin. Who knows if it is not going to be our business to bury this Bonaparte's glory in Paris?"

"Souvoroff is dead," said Grouzinoff.

"Yes, he is dead, but what about it?"

"Only this—thank God that he is."

Minaieff could only shrug his shoulders in amazement. He was about to speak, but Grouzinoff, raising his voice, continued:

"It might have been worse. . . . It might have ended, not only by life in disgrace and exile at Kontchakskoie, but by the scaffold, if His Majesty had so willed."

Snatching his red cap, Grouzinoff rushed out of the room. He could be seen going past the windows towards a green meadow where a herd of horses were roaming.

As though thunder-struck, Minaieff remained standing in the middle of the room.

"Don't mind him, pray," said Elmourzin soothingly. "We all know that he is not quite right in his head."

"I can see that myself,—the lad is quite crazy."

"All the Grouzinoffs are like that. . . . You must have heard what happened to his brother Evgraf—haven't you?"

"When passing down there at home, I heard he had been tried by a court at Tcherkassk."

"You have heard right. He was tried and sentenced to be reduced to the ranks and deprived of his decorations, and then he was flogged to death."

Minaieff sighed heavily.

"I see!" he said, "Life when the French were besetting us on all sides in the Alps, was less difficult than it is here. How did it happen?"

The orderly brought in a tureen with cabbage soup. Elmourzin pushed a chair to the table, poured out a glass of vodka and said:

"Sit down, and while you eat I'll tell you how it happened that our Affanassy Ossipovitch talks as he does and why he chooses to masquerade as a Jacobin. You are a strong, healthy man. . . ."

"Yes," said Minaieff. "I have no reason to complain. When I was young, I could break a horse-shoe with one hand."

"Well, Evgraf Grouzinoff was twice as healthy as you are. He was almost seven feet high, and as strong as a bear. And as devoted to the Emperor as a faithful dog. He appeared every evening at the Palace, and the Emperor only went to bed when he knew that Evgraf Grouzinoff lay before his door."

"But what was the Emperor afraid of?"

"Treachery . . . treachery on the part of those who were nearest to him. And he knew that the Life-Guards Cossack Grouzinoff could not be bought by any sum of money, by any promises. Then they began to calumniate Grouzinoff."

"But why?"

"Because the Emperor is not loved."

"And what did Grouzinoff do?"

"Grouzinoff was silent. He was exiled to the Don country. Before leaving for Tcherkassk, Grouzinoff presented himself before the Emperor. The Emperor said to him: 'I am sorry to part with you, Ossipovitch. You served me faithfully and I was very fond of you. In order that you may not forget me, I make you a present of a thousand souls of peasants.' "[19]

"Then why was he sent away?" exclaimed Minaieff. "Grouzinoff surely prized the Emperor's trust and confidence more than a present of a thousand souls of peasants."

"Of course. That was Grouzinoff's way of looking at it. What need had he of peasants, besides? He was a Cossack and not a landowner. So far as I know, he possessed no land on the Don, only a small house at Tcherkassk. Well, shortly after his arrival there, deputies of those peasants the Emperor had made him a present of came to see him. 'What do you order us to do, *barin?*'[20] they said. 'Where are we to settle down?' 'I have no need of you,' answered Grouzinoff. 'Go back to where you have come from and go on living as

[19] This was the way to count the number of peasants belonging to a landowner at the time of serfdom in Russia. Hence Gogol's famous novel: "Dead Souls."

[20] Master.

before. I have had enough benefits from my Emperor. I shouldn't know what to do with you here, and I shouldn't care to leave Tcherkassk and settle down wherever you live.' The deputies were delighted, of course; they fell on their knees before him and kissed his hands. But Grouzinoff made them rise and said to them: 'One ought not to bow down like that before man—only before God.' . . . Well, Ivan Kouzmitch, you know our Tcherkassk, although you have spent your life in campaigns abroad. You can easily imagine how they depicted Grouzinoff as a Voltarian after that. And another unfortunate incident happened that very day. His brother Peter was crossing the river Protoka on his way to the Don. As he rode up to the ford, the sentinel called out to him to go over the bridge. Peter, who had a sharp tongue like all the brothers Grouzinoff, answered that he took no heed of sentinels, generals or field-marshals, that he was crossing the Don to attack the enemy."

"What enemy?" said Minaieff. "Was the man drunk?"

"Not in the least. . . . He was simply joking. And his friends and well-wishers reported that joke, saying that the Grouzinoffs boasted of taking Constantinople, peopling it with men of all faiths and setting up their own senate and their own administration. And the Grouzinoffs were supposed to have added, that if they raised an armed revolt in Russia, it would not be like Stenka Razin [21] and Pugatcheff,[22] but so that Moscow itself should tremble."

"It is only at Tcherkassk that they can invent such stories," said Minaieff, rising from table. "Thank you for your bread and salt.[23] And he was tried for this?"

[21] A Cossack brigand leader who raised an armed revolt among the Cossacks and fought on the Volga in the seventeenth century, at the time of the Czar Alexei Mihailovitch, second reigning monarch of the Romanoff dynasty.

[22] Another Cossack leader; he proclaimed himself to be Peter III in 1773, and asserted that he had escaped from Catherine II and was ready to redress grievances, give liberty to the peasants and put Catherine into a convent. He raised a rebellion among the Cossacks and the peasants, but was defeated by General Michelson and then by Souvoroff in 1774, brought to Moscow in an iron cage and executed there on January 11th, 1775.

[23] It is a Russian custom to thank the host or hostess after a meal.

"Ataman[24] Orloff tried him. And General Kojin was sent from St. Petersburg. The Grouzinoffs were sentenced to be flogged. Yes. . . . Evgraf was flogged to death on the public square of Tcherkassk. Peter was laid up for a long time afterwards, but ended by recovering. Our Affanassy Ossipovitch was with his squadron in Holland at the time. He was made prisoner by the English and very badly treated. He returned home after a hasty and shameful peace had been signed, but he was almost on the verge of madness. Now he only raves about one hero, Bonaparte. He reads all he can about him, compares him continually to Souvoroff, and rates him higher than the latter."

Minaieff sat on the sofa, looking gloomy and displeased. Elmourzin walked up and down the room, smoking good tobacco out of an expensive meerschaum pipe with an amber mouthpiece. They were both silent. The children's voices were heard in the next room. They had started singing. Minaieff listened to them, bent his head and sighed heavily.

"It makes me quite afraid to hear all you say. Heavens! Why did I bring my children here?" he said in despair. "I thought of giving them a good education, of letting them enter a regiment of the Guards . . . but I see now that it would have been better for them to remain in the *stanitsa*[25] and grow up as peasants."

"Why so?" said Grouzinoff, who had re-entered the room. "What has a good education to do with it?"

"Excuse me, sir, but I have heard things in the space of half-an-hour here which I have never heard in the course of the fifty-three years of my life. My head is swimming. Things about the sacred person of the Emperor and comparisons between Bonaparte and Souvoroff. Great God! I thought: 'If I give them a good education there will be no *"But"* when they reach the rank of colonel.'"

"What *'But'?* What do you mean?"

Elmourzin stood in front of Minaieff, puffing away at his pipe. Minaieff waved the smoke away from him with his

[24] Cossack military chief.
[25] Any Cossack village.

hands. He looked very agitated. He told them about his conversation with the officer at the watch-house.

"You see, Petia," [26] said Grouzinoff. "Do you call this justice?" and he began to pace up and down the room with an indignant air.

Elmourzin pensively sucked his pipe, and Minaieff went on grumbling.

"You must know, Peter Ivanovitch, there is not a thing I would not do for my boys. When their mother died and they were left orphans, Admiral Ogloblin, to whom I had once happened to do a good turn, took them into his family. When the Admiral died, his widow and my benefactress, Maria Alexeevna, always made it a special point that my Kouzma and Vania should have everything exactly as her own children, Evgueny and Nadenka, had it. She hired a tutor for the children. He taught the youngsters the Prayer-book and the Book of Psalms, reading and writing and also Latin grammar. They can read music and sing: you heard them just now. Last year Evgueny was sent to the Naval Corps here, and this year, when I had come back from Italy, I decided to bring my boys to the Nobility Corps. I counted on my benefactors to help me. But where are they now? Platoff and Yermoloff are in disgrace and in exile. And the Field-Marshal is dead and buried."

He stopped for a moment and then went on again:

"I can only put my hope in God. . . . Peter Ivanovitch, dear sir, can't you tell me what I should do? Isn't there anybody whose favor I might win by offering him a nice present? You know the saying: 'If you do not grease your wheels they will not go round.' . . . I have with me a thing or two I might offer. I have got a kegful of excellent fresh caviar, I also have a smoked sturgeon, and a Turkish sword chased with gold. Do just tell me to whom I might go and what I should offer? People have become so touchy nowadays. You offer them a rouble and they go for you as though they had been offered poison."

With tears standing in his gray eyes, Minaieff looked searchingly up into Elmourzin's face.

[26] Diminutive for Peter.

"No, my friend, I should not advise you to do that. People, of course, are still fond enough of bribes, but they are afraid to be caught at it. Besides, yours is a business where nothing can be done without the Emperor. Perhaps you had better seek an audience with him? But then it all depends on his mood of the moment. You have always been with Souvoroff, haven't you?"

"All my life. All I am I owe to him."

"Then I do not advise you even to try. But look here. You say you consider no sacrifice too great for your children?"

"As God is my witness, I do!"

"Would you be prepared to pay seven hundred roubles a year for each?"

"Well, if I must. . . ."

"We have got a very clever man here in Petersburg, half French, half German, Platon Antonovitch Jacquinot, by name; he comes from Alsace. He has a boarding-school for sons of the gentry on the Vassily Ostrov, Fifth Line.[27] I have heard that school vastly praised. The boys there are of good families, and they are taught all kinds of foreign languages. A boy who finishes that school, speaks German and French fluently. It would be easy for your boys to change over from there to the Nobility Corps later on, whenever the occasion offers itself. Or, if not, they can always enlist in our regiment as ensigns. It would come to the same."

"Jacquinot . . ." Minaieff said pensively. "What a name! Sounds silly, like a monkey's name from a show-booth at a fair!"

"The school is a good one, though."

"Well," said Minaieff with a sigh, "I'll have to have a look at it. It is not exactly the thing I had in mind, but it's all right. If Jacquinot it must be, it will just have to be Jacquinot! There is no other way out."

Minaieff did not sleep a wink that night. No wonder either for, night-time though it was, it was not night. The room where he slept with his sons gave upon a courtyard, and

[27] Basil's Island on the other side of the Neva. The streets were called *lines* there.

the window had no shutters. The white linen blind with its iron rod hung closely to the window-pane. A strange, white and yet dim, peculiar kind of preposterous and cheerless light, penetrated through the blind into the room. Neither the fatigue of his last sleepless night on the road nor the emotions of the past day, which had been so full of anxiety and new impressions, could make him sleep. He constantly kept getting up and going to the window. Pushing the blind out of the way, he looked out. . . . A smooth meadow beyond a fence, and a small grove of young birches were there. A herd of the regiment's horses had been turned out to graze, and a Cossack on foot, in a shako and greatcoat, stood guarding them. One could see far, and everything that the eye could reach stood out clearly visible, illuminated by that ghostly light, yet throwing no shadow and looking like spectres too. All was silent around. The horses stood under the birches and did not graze. They, too, seemed oppressed by that untimely something that was neither night nor day. The cold sky was a blue-green, tinged with an orange streak near the horizon. There were no stars. What had become of them all? In the distance, to the left, appeared a gray row of peasants' huts, a copse, a broken-down fence, and, beyond that, the silver surface of the wide river.

"Good God! How sad, how bleak and dreary everything looks here," thought Minaieff, turning away from the window. In the room, too, all stood out clear and distinct, but all was pale and unreal, quite different from its aspect by day. Every little detail seemed enhanced, more salient than in the light of day. An earthernware washing-basin with a water-jug on a wooden stool and, hanging above them, a towel with cocks which had once been red but were now a faded pink, embroidered on its ends, pushed forward as it were, demanding attention. Next to it—a wide bed on which, lying athwart and snugly curled up, were Kouzma and Vania soundly asleep.

Minaieff recollected the conversations he had heard that day. Elmourzin's tale about Evgraf Grouzinoff, who had been flogged to death on the ground of a silly and absurd report. His brother Affanassy's bold words about Bonaparte. "Fancy

rating him above Souvoroff . . ." he thought. "'French glory is in the ascendant.' . . . My God! What have we come to? Where have I brought my children?" Then he thought of the crowd that had followed the coffin . . . of the new faces he had seen and the new names he had heard. "Derjavin . . . a poet." How well he had said it: *"Here lies Souvoroff."*

Minaieff lay down. No sooner had he closed his eyes than the face of the Field-Marshal rose before him, that beloved face, once so well-known and now so distant and unfamiliar with that little growth of beard on its chin, like the face of a stranger. He saw once more the crimson coffin swaying on its way as it was being carried and lowered into the narrow trench, and he imagined he heard the clods of red sand fall dully thudding upon the coffin. Invisible threads as it were extended, linking him to the Lavra, to the tomb underneath the flagstones, and he believed he heard how from there, far away, a sharp and grating voice came stridently shouting: "Learning is light, ignorance—darkness. Ten ignorant dolts for one man who has had education."

"It is fate, I believe," ran through his mind. "Teach me, O Lord, to do what is right! I cannot leave the boys with Maria Alexéevna any longer. Shall I take them home and ask Father John Preobrajensky to bring them up? But he has a growing daughter, and besides, his wife would spoil them. And here—this Jacquinot. . . . What a queer name! It is worse than the name of a Kalmuck."

It was already morning—a golden ray had found its way through a chink of the window and was playing with the dust motes in the air. The rising sun had gilded the blind and thrown across it the pattern of the window-frame. At last Minaieff dropped off into the deep and sound, though short, sleep of a man used to a life of campaigning.

He awoke early. Somewhere near, church bells were ringing for early mass. A trumpeter was sounding reveille in the courtyard, and the horses, which had been driven home from grazing, neighed, pawing the stones with their hoofs. Kouzma

and Ivan were washing and dressing quietly, afraid of disturbing their father.

Minaieff got up, shaking off his sleepiness.

He left the house with his children, stepping cautiously, careful not to wake anybody. Guided by the sound of the church bells, they made their way to the Yamskaia and found the church, which was low and wide, painted pink and built in the shape of a ship.

They heard early mass and, on returning to the barracks, found Elmourzin at his morning tea. As he had done the day before, he offered Minaieff the regimental droshky to take him to Jacquinot.

"I must begin by a visit to the Naval Cadet Corps, Peter Ivanovitch. I must see Ogloblin's boy and bring him presents from home," said the Colonel.

"That is quite near. The driver knows the way and will take you there."

It was a gay and sunny Sunday. Church bells were ringing everywhere in town. Carriage-wheels rattled on the pavements. Sounds of wind music could be heard coming from beyond the Nevsky. Now, in the glitter of the sun, the capital appeared to Minaieff less depressing. *Yaliki,*[28] curved up at their stern-posts, were flitting hither and thither on the Neva, sweeping up like white swallows as they rose on the crests of the dark-blue waves. Large barges, wide-bellied bumboats, dark sloops rigged out with sails, were laboring up-stream, churning white foam. On the pontoon bridge, the horses' hoofs struck the wooden planks in a sharp tattoo, and the rush of the water under the bridge made one feel giddy. Beyond the bridge, ships were discharging their cargo. A resinous, spicy smell evoking strange lands overseas, came from their hatchways.

Kouzma and Ivan were at a loss which way to look. One after the other, their rapid exclamations came pouring out.

"Look! Do you see that? There! Green birds! And those big barrels? What a fine river! It is wider than the Don.

[28] Light yawls for hire on the Neva.

Father, are those real ships? Look at these! And what is that? A golden ship in the sky. . . ." [29]

At the Naval Corps the cadet on duty, dressed in a dark-blue jacket and ducks, inquired after their business and showed them into a hall which was so large that it was not easy for the eye to gauge the whole of its length. The model of a ship, fully rigged with masts and sails, stood along the wall. Three white lines were painted along its broad black sides. Miniature brass guns peeped out of the half-open port-holes.

Kouzma and Ivan could not tear themselves away from it.

"Father, are those real guns? Can one fire out of them?"

They recognized Ogloblin from afar by that shy awkwardness of his, peculiar to short-sighted people. He did not see the Minaieffs at once on entering the hall, and the cadet who had acted as their guide pointed him out to them.

"Jenia!" [30]

"Kouzma! Vania!"

Ogloblin with a click of his heels made a polite bow to the Colonel. He did not know him very well and felt shy of him. Minaieff thought the boy had grown taller and become pale in the course of the year that had passed.

"Your mother," said Minaieff, "told us to see you, Evgueny. She sends her love and presents from the country. She begs of you to cheer up and not be homesick. She thinks of coming herself to St. Petersburg next winter."

Meanwhile one of the cadets was approaching them. He was somewhat shorter than Evgueny and had a round, ruddy face and a pair of large, staring eyes. He walked with the lurching swagger of an old sea-dog, keeping his knees slightly bent. As he was passing the boys he looked at Evgueny and gave a knowing wink at the bags and parcels with dainties from the country, nudging him with his elbow.

"Who is this?" asked Kouzma.

"That's my chum, Sasha Stolnikoff."

Evgueny called to Stolnikoff. The boy came up and made his bow to Minaieff, at the same time, unnoticed by anybody,

[29] The gilt sailing-ship on the spire of the Admiralty.
[30] Diminutive for *Evgueny* (Eugène).

deftly digging his fist into Kouzma's ribs. In no way put out, Kouzma promptly paid him back in his own coin.

"You'll make a good cadet," said Stolnikoff, without taking offense.

"Ivan Kouzmitch, may Kouzia [31] and Vania come with me to the dormitory to take the parcels to the matron?"

"Certainly, children, go. I shall wait for you here."

Stolnikoff and Evgueny possessed themselves of the parcels and carried them off. Kouzma and Vania, in their country kit and high boots, followed.

In the dormitory, Kouzma was struck by the long row of berths.

"Do you sleep here?"

"Yes."

"And who sleeps there?"

"Stolnikoff."

The matron, a dried up old maid, looked severely at Kouzma and Vania and said:

"See that you behave yourselves, please. In half-an-hour you must be gone."

"Aye, aye, Kapitolina Serguevna!" cried Stolnikoff.

With his sailor's knife he set to work, ripping open the sacking into which the parcels had been sewn. Kouzma, who had taken a violent liking to Stolnikoff, helped him, explaining what they contained as he did so.

"This is apple-*pastila* [32]. . . . And this is plum jelly. Here are crystallised cherries. . . . And these, Evgueny, are your favorite rose-leaf sweets. Nadenka put them in."

Once this name had escaped Kouzma's lips, it seemed to stick to his tongue. Every other word he said was "Nadenka."

"Nadenka told me to . . . Nadenka wrapped this up . . . Nadenka packed that parcel . . . Nadenka looked after the baking of these cakes. . . ."

"Always Nadenka?" grinned Evgueny.

"When it is Nadenka who deals out the jam, I always get

[31] Diminutive for Kouzma.

[32] A kind of stiff apple-jelly. *Pastila* can be made of any sort of fruit.

one spoonful to every two she puts on his plate, Jenia," said Vania.

"That's because I'm bigger," said Kouzma with confusion. He did not like the conversation, which was growing too personal to be pleasant in the presence of a stranger, so he asked, turning to Stolnikoff:

"Has Jenia ever had a spanking since coming here?"

"Jenia? . . . Not he. . . . He is so quiet."

"And yourself?"

"Rather!"

Evgueny and the two Cossack boys fell to exchanging reminiscences from home. As they were using the vocabulary of the Don, Stolnikoff, unable to understand all that was said, burst out impatiently at last with:

"I say, boys, what's the gibberish you are talking? Are you Poles or what?"

"We are not! We are Cossacks! We are Cossacks of the Don!" said Kouzma with pride.

He waited for the impression his words would make upon Stolnikoff, but evidently there was none, for he went on undisturbed:

"Are you boys coming to our school?"

"No . . . we should have liked to go to the Nobility Corps, but we can't be received there for some reason or other."

"I'll tell you—it's just because you are Cossacks. That's why! There are no Cossacks there, nor here either. There are Swedes and lots of Germans, Finns and Esthonians, Tartars and Poles and Georgians, but Cossacks—no!" said Stolnikoff with a challenge in his voice.

Kouzma felt puzzled. He wanted to ask why it was like that, but, feeling that something offensive was hidden there, he thought better of it, and once more Nadenka's name appeared as the order of the day.

"Nadenka got a bad scolding just before we left."

"Why? What had she done?"

"Vania and I both jumped from the roof into a flower-bed, and she came after us; but she fell and hurt her knee. She wanted to hide it and did not even cry, but Maria Alexéevna

saw blood on her dress and she was left without her pudding, and we got a flogging."

"You did. . . . I did not get much," said Vania.

"I didn't mind. I took my pudding to Nadenka. She wouldn't take it at first, but I made her and we ate it together."

"Who is this Nadenka?" Stolnikoff asked.

"It's my sister," answered Ogloblin.

"What a gallant knight, to be sure!"

"What did you say?" asked Kouzma.

"I say you are a gallant knight, paying court to a princess."

"You'd better look out! Leave her alone."

"Whom must I leave alone? Your Nadenka?"

"Yes, Nadenka. I tell you to leave her alone. It'll be best for you."

"Why will it be best for me?"

"Because . . . if you don't . . . I'll hit you one in the face."

"You will? Just you try."

"I won't try. I'll just do it!"

"Go on with it, then. . . . I'm waiting!"

Kouzma threw back his arm and landed his fist straight on Stolnikoff's face. Blood spurted from the boy's bruised lip.

Stolnikoff had not expected this and stood dazed for a moment. But he immediately recovered, rushed at Kouzma and tripped him up. Both rolled on the floor.

"That's a mean trick!" roared Kouzma, who was lying under Stolnikoff.

"Sasha, leave off! Kouzma! Let him be!"

"Get out, I'll teach him how to speak about Nadenka!"

Blows came raining down upon Stolnikoff's blue jacket and Kouzma's country-made tunic. Kapitolina Serguéevna hastened to the rescue.

"For shame! I thought you were decent boys, and you are but savage Cossacks!"

Kouzma and Ivan were turned out of the dormitory. Stolnikoff was put in the corner. Ogloblin's country presents were taken away from him. The cadets who had come running to

the place of combat sent cries of angry defiance after Kouzma as he was bundled out of the room.

"Such cheek! He dares to beat a cadet! That country bumpkin! One sees at once he is a Cossack. We'll be even yet. . . . We'll teach you a good lesson!"

Kouzma walked proudly, his hands in his pockets, the whole of his demeanor saying: "You just try to jeer at my Nadenka!"

Bewildered and amazed, Minaieff heard all Kapitolina Serguéevna's complaint and hurriedly left the Corps with his sons. He was so depressed by what had happened, that he felt suffocated in the enormous hall and did not even scold Kouzma for his behavior.

"Who knows! Jacquinot may really be better after all?" he thought.

Jacquinot's boarding-school immediately made a favorable impression upon Minaieff. The proprietor of the school, Platon Antonovitch, and his wife, Emilia Victorovna, were courteous and amiable to the last degree. They praised the good looks and healthy appearance of the boys, thereby touching their father's heart and flattering his pride. He was also agreeably surprised to hear them speak such good Russian.

"They may be Germans, but they do not look it," thought Minaieff. His talk with Elmourzin and Grouzinoff at barracks the day before shot through his mind and he went on speculating: "God forbid there should be a new war. Still, it might happen. My Turkish and Polish very often came in useful to me. But when I was in Italy I could not say a word to either the Austrians or the French prisoners of war, or the inhabitants."

"Will you teach them French and German?" he asked.

"Do not worry about that! Our boys speak German better than they do at the Corps, and in French they even write compositions. Dancing and graceful deportment, good manners, calligraphy, drawing, history, geography and mathematics—all this we teach them. And your sons will not be dull here. You come from the Don country?"

"Yes."

"We have a boy here from your part of the world. He is of the same age as your eldest son."

"Who is he?"

"Prince Serbedjab-Tiumen."

"A Kalmuck," drawled Minaieff and immediately felt ashamed. He had said "a Kalmuck" just as others said of him: "A Cossack colonel."—"What about equality?" he thought. "We are all mortal. All is vanity. It is a sin to talk like that."

The Jacquinots took him over their school.

The dormitories and the class-rooms of the elder pupils were on the first floor. On the ground floor Jacquinot and his wife themselves taught the younger ones. Everything was scrupulously clean. Strips of drugget were laid on all the waxed floors. The wooden bedsteads had chintz covers. Pictures under glass hung on the walls: a Catholic monastery with monks in black cassocks, exactly as Minaieff had seen them in Milan; a castle on a rock and, below it, a hunter in a broad-brimmed hat, such as he had often seen when they had marched through Austria.

"All these have been done by our pupils," boasted Jacquinot. "Look how well they have drawn Diana and Endymion in Italian chalk."

Minaieff gave a look and turned away. "It's indecent!" he thought. "That rag of a skirt of hers does not reach to the knee! Her breasts are bare. What good is there in drawing such things?"

However—he only sighed and said nothing. He looked round to see if there were any icons and was content, for icons, although small ones, hung in the classrooms, and there was a large image with a lampada burning before it in its corner in each of the dormitories.

"And where are the pupils?"

"To-day is Sunday. They are on leave with their parents."

This also pleased Minaieff. It meant that they were not children with no one to look after them.

"What about attendance at church?"

"They go to church regularly on Saturdays and Sundays, and we have a priest who gives them lessons in religion."

"Well—take in my youngsters, then. Put them on the roll of your squad. I shall bring them to you in a week's time."

Minaieff went downstairs to Jacquinot's rooms, paid him for a year in advance, begged Emilia Victorovna to be a mother to his fledgelings, and left the house to get into his droshky.

Minaieff looked gloomy. He was sorry for his sons. They would feel lonely with no father or mother to care for them. His time was entirely taken up by his service to the Emperor. Here he was ordered to go with his regiment to Georgia next autumn and stay there for a term of four years. He might, of course, take his sons with him as his father had taken him on his campaigns. Platoff also had been through the Turkish campaign as a young boy. But then his boys would have no education, and this accursed *"But"* would be a blot on them all their life. And so Minaieff decided to devote the remaining week to putting the wisdom inherited from his forefathers into the mind of his sons, to stay embedded there for the whole of their lives.

VI.

GROUZINOFF, in whose rooms they were staying, rose late on days when there was no drill. But Minaieff woke up with the first sound of the church bells, got his children out of bed and took them to early mass. Back again at the barracks, they had their tea, and then he sat him down on a stool, placed his boys between his knees and, looking with his sharp gray eyes into the brown eyes of Kouzma and the bluish-gray ones of Vania, he spoke to them, expounding his paternal teachings.

Solemn in the calm silence of the room, rang out the words of the old father. Like lettering carved with a sharp chisel on stone, they engraved themselves in the children's memory to remain there forever. Admonitions alternated with stories of war, brave deeds, loyalty, and most of all, of *him,* Alexander Vassilievitch Souvoroff, the unforgettable, the immortal; and

every one of these stories he wound up with: "This was none of your Bonapartes, if you please!"

"Listen, my sons," said Minaieff slowly and sternly; "serve our Emperor and our Quiet Don [38] faithfully. Look at me. I was a common Cossack and now I am a colonel, because I was brave and served well. Follow the customs and traditions of your forefathers. Be good Cossacks. Place your faith and hope in God and He will not forsake you. Obey your chiefs, be considerate to your equals and lenient with your inferiors. Above all, Kouzia and Vania, always and everywhere keep this one thing in mind: never, never dream of forgetting that the Quiet Don nurtured you and brought you up."

In the clear calm of the morning, the old Cossack's words sounded with more than ordinary importance.

Kouzma looked at the scar on his father's neck and the patch of white hair at the back of his head. He knew that the first was the cut of a Turkish yatagan and the white spot a contusion left by a Polish cannon-ball. He was proud of his father.

"Father, do tell us one of your stories about Cossack Seleznyoff," said Vania, fingering the tassels of Minaieff's sash.

"Seleznyoff was an old sergeant from the Don. Wherever Field-Marshal Alexander Vassilievitch went, and whatever he did, Seleznyoff was always near him throughout his life. Alexander Vassilievitch would have been seventy in November, and Seleznyoff must be nearing eighty. Proshka at home with the samovar, Seleznyoff in the field with the horses—they were the Count's two most devoted and faithful servants."

"Why did Seleznyoff serve Souvoroff so faithfully all his life?"

"Because the Field-Marshal faithfully served the Empress, and, afterwards, the Emperor, all his life."

"And why did the Field-Marshal serve the Empress faithfully?"

[38] The Cossacks apply the epithet of "Quiet" (*Tikhy*) to the river Don. They always say: "Tikhy Don" ("Quiet Don"). But "the Don"—"on the Don"—also means "the Province—in the Province of the Don."

"Because the Empress led Russia to glory, victory and welfare."

It was all so clear and simple and did not admit of any doubt.

"My sons, you remember the hills at Maria Alexeevna's place, don't you? Now then, try to imagine mountains many times higher than that, tremendous mountains, so high that snow lies on their tops. And, in between them, green valleys and jolly little houses with red-tiled roofs and little white spires, and vineyards with stone walls around them and a paved road winding between. All looks so clean and cheerful under the deep, dark-blue sky. The sun shines brightly, and it is so hot that one can hardly breathe. Last year,—it was on the 6th of June, on the river Tidone, near the fortress of Stradella,—the French general Macdonald crossed the river and came in conflict with our troops. The rattle of musketry and the roar of cannon began; cannon-balls flew humming over our heads, bullets whistled in the air. Our boys fell to laying about them with their bayonets. All of a sudden I saw Souvoroff himself, with the black ribbon of the Order of Malta round his neck and his white field shirt tucked into his breeches, come tearing along on a small Cossack horse across the fields. Cracking his whip, he plunged his horse straight into the very thick of the battle!"

Minaieff stopped for breath. He looked at his sons.

Kouzma and Vania were listening with wide-open eyes, all aglow with delight.

"Into the very thick of the battle . . ." said Kouzma in a whisper. "Well, and Souvoroff, wasn't he afraid?"

"Not he! 'How glorious!' he shouted. 'Charge! Cut! Thrust! Hurrah'—and off he went. General Denissoff gave his Turkish stallion his head; and our regiment followed over stone walls, over fields and brooks, over anything that lay in our way. We dashed against the squares of the French. Their men stood with faces white as chalk, and eyes scarcely visible under their shakos, looking like dead men stood up on their legs. The straps of their knapsacks are wide and protect their chests; you must aim between the straps so that your lance should strike home. They wear epaulets covered with metal scales, which it is difficult to cut with a sword. The smoke of

the musket-fire was still thick in the air, and there was an acrid smell of gunpowder. Our lances set to work. We shouted, as Souvoroff had taught us: 'Bas les armes! . . . Pardon! . . . Bas les armes. . . .' But I don't believe they heard what we shouted. We met in a tangle, then fell back. But we had held up the advance of Macdonald's regiments. The din seemed to have quieted down for the moment. Then, suddenly, the hurried tramp of troops came from the stone-paved road behind us. It was our infantry, marching at the double, which came rolling on like a huge wave. Souvoroff's eyes glowed like embers—they were like a wolf's eyes in the night. . . . 'Minaieff!—Follow me!'—We galloped off to meet them. His Highness, the Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovitch himself, was leading the troops. Prince Bagration, on a lean black mountain horse, rode at his side. He caught sight of Souvoroff and came galloping towards him. We stood waiting, and we could see how, a half mile or so away, Macdonald was drawing up his troops. And there was an innumerable number of them. Souvoroff rode up to Bagration and ordered him to charge.

"'When?' asked Bagration. He looked tired, white all over with dust, as though rolled in flour. Perspiration streaked his dark face.

"'On the spot!'

"Bagration led Souvoroff aside and, audible only to the Field-Marshal and myself, he said:

"'We ought to wait a bit, your Excellency. There are too many stragglers. The men are dead tired. I have got hardly forty to a company.'

"'And Macdonald has not even twenty,' Souvoroff whispered back into Bagration's ear with a beaming smile. 'Charge! and God speed you!'

"Bagration merely shrugged his shoulders. He drew his sword and gave the word of command: 'Half-companies, form!'

"Bandsmen assembled and ran forward. Music rang out and the men began to sing . . . all fatigue had gone in a trice. Our troops charged and grappled with the French, Souvoroff all the time in the foremost rank with them. Seleznyoff sees

that. So he just shoves his horse alongside the Field-Marshal's, grabs it by the bridle and tries to drag him away.

"'What's that!' cries Souvoroff. 'How dare you touch a general, a Field-Marshal?' and reaches out at Seleznyoff with his whip. But Seleznyoff only puts up a shoulder to ward off the blow. His face is screwed up in wrinkles, and his eyes look cross as he shouts back with his toothless mouth:

"'I won't let you go! It is no Field-Marshal's job to be in a scuffle! Give your orders. They will do it without you. Your life is worth more than that.'

"'Seleznyoff!' cried the Field-Marshal, brandishing his whip. 'I am not joking, I tell you!'

"'Neither am I, your Excellency. I am too old for that. Don't touch me!'

"Seleznyoff held his own and dragged Souvoroff away to a safer place."

"Did the soldiers see this, father?"

"The soldiers were marching to battle; they were pale, and their eyes looked dark and forbidding. But when they saw what Seleznyoff was at, a grin lit up their faces and they shouted: 'Well done, old Cossack! Keep the Field-Marshal out of harm!'"

"Father, where is Seleznyoff now?"

"Souvoroff left the Army in October and traveled to St. Petersburg. He told Seleznyoff to stay with the Army and come on with his horse. Probably he is still on his way to where he was told to bring it, or he may be already there."

"What kind of a horse had Souvoroff?"

"An ordinary Cossack horse from the Don."

"Seleznyoff will be terribly sorry when he hears that Souvoroff is dead."

"Oh, he will cry his eyes out, the old man! He loved Souvoroff better than he ever loved his own father. I doubt if he will survive it."

Looking out of the window, they could see a trumpeter of the Cossack Life-Guards, bare-headed, in his shirt-sleeves, but having had his morning's wash, and with the ample folds of his light blue breeches all but dragging on the ground, come out

to sound the reveille. Its melancholy, luring notes had scarcely time to die away when the men came pouring out of the muted, sleeping-quarters. Presently their red unbuttoned summer jackets dotted the parade ground. The freshness of morning hung in the air flowed in through the open window. Ivan Kouzmitch Minaieff went on:

"You are Cossacks of the Don, so you will be brave. But barring courage, there are yet other things you must learn. When sent on an errand, give heed to all and everything. Unnoticed by any one yourselves, leave nothing unnoticed. When fighting, show your enemy it is not your own life that counts with you, but the glorious name and honor of a Cossack."

He looked into his boys' eyes. Two pairs of eyes, one brown and one blue-gray, looked steadily back into his ageing own. From what he read in them he knew that his sons would never turn traitor, nor betray that soldierly name of their father's, and never cast dishonor on the name of the Don.

The week was over, and Minaieff took his boys to Jacquinot's boarding-school. There he blessed them with the sign of the cross and hurried out of the house. He had no taste for lengthy leave-takings. Then, bidding good-bye to the Cossack Life-Guards and thanking them warmly for their hospitable good-fellowship and cheer, he sat down for a moment [34] and prayed before the icons, and then wrapped himself in his old, travel-worn *bourka* for protection from the dust, and set out. He was very glad to leave this awful town with its white nights, where, pending the return of better days, Russia's glory had been laid to rest, and to turn his face toward Georgia, the far-off Persian border, there to serve his Czar.

The green cone of the Pulkov Hill rose in front. Wide open spaces now seemed to shrink, hemmed in by woods, and then unfolded again into meadows spreading and green under the golden rays of a shimmering day. A sudden shower came

[34] A Russian custom. Before starting on a journey, Russians always sit down for a moment, then get up, pray before the icons and take leave of everybody.

pelting down. It washed the dust from Minaieff's face and cleared his mind.

He turned to look back.

Golden spires glittered in the sun; straggling white houses showed against the green of the islands. Before his eyes took shape the figure of a man—thin face, lank hair in strands to his shoulders, a cut-away coat which did not button in front, and a tricolor sash. A fire burns in his eyes. Minaieff knows it well—that fire! He has seen it light up Souvoroff's eyes, and he knows that it spells victory.

A cold shiver ran down his spine.

"My sons, my sons," thought the old Cossack. "What awaits you in life?"

PART TWO

I.

LONG, stormy years went by. In Western Europe, republics, like so many precocious plants, came into sudden flower and quickly shed their spectacular bloom, changing into kingdoms. "The Little Corporal" crowned himself Emperor of the French. He shared out thrones to his brothers and next of kin, re-shaping the map of Europe to suit his whim, The victorious French eagles swept through the whole of Europe and reached the Niemen. Russian armies fought in Austria, Prussia, Sweden, Moldavia, Wallachia, and Transcaucasia. To the crossing of the Alps, another feat was added, unparalleled in history—the crossing of the Gulf of Bothnia over ice. Peace-treaties were signed to the sound of cannon and public rejoicing, only to be followed by new campaigns on the morrow. The tremors of the French Revolution still reverberated through Europe. The gaunt specters of bloodshed, ruin and poverty stalked about the highroads.

Only in the heart of Russia quiet prevailed.

Somewhere far away, soldiers were fighting. The Emperor—not Paul now, but Alexander—and his ministers were busy about politics. Ambassadors, resident ministers and consuls bent over elaborate documents and reports. Couriers and cabinet messengers galloped across frontiers to the capitals of Europe. The Imperial Fleet displayed the St. Andrew's flag in the Mediterranean, watching the southern States and Turkey. But all this tremendous and complicated work spent itself, as it were, in the depths of ministers' office-rooms and the privacy of audiences with His Majesty. Society contented itself with short statements in the official "Gazettes" and with what it could glean from conversations with office-bearers in drawing-rooms.

Colonel Minaieff need not have had any misgivings about

leaving his sons behind. Their life in the northern capital was a happy one.

Neither in Jacquinot's boarding-school nor in the house of Maria Alexéevna Ogloblin, (who had lived in St. Petersburg since the autumn of 1801) did Kouzma and Vania see or hear anything that might have tempted them to forget or disobey their father's bidding.

Maria Alexéevna lived on the Quay of the Neva, in the house of Stepan Fedorovitch Dournoff, an old friend of hers. Dournoff had lost his wife the year before. That she made her home in the house of a widower still comparatively young might easily have set the tongues of gossips wagging, but Maria Alexéevna gave them no cause for this. She lived in a separate flat of her own, which she hired from Dournoff and for which she paid him rent as she would have done to any landlord. Her thirty-four years, and her son of twelve and daughter of eleven, were by no means negligible factors in protecting her from slander. Moreover, although Dournoff was but thirty-seven, the high post he held at the Ministry of the Imperial Household and his numerous connections, served to silence the most garrulous tongues. So Maria Alexéevna was given every possibility of renewing her old ties and friendships, which she had not been able to keep up during the seven years of her widowhood and the uninterrupted rusticity of life on her estate of Stolpiagui.

Her son was a cadet at the Naval Corps. Her daughter Nadenka she was educating at home. Life was very quiet at the Ogloblins' on week-days, but on Sundays their flat filled with noise and gaiety. Evgueny came home on leave, and so did Kouzma and Vania who, practically members of the Ogloblin's household in virtue of their stay with them in the country, had now been entrusted by their father to Maria Alexéevna's care. They all formed one family.

Thus time went on. Nadenka was gradually developing from an awkward-looking, thin legged and long armed fledgeling in a short little frock with a flounced skirt showing her lace-

edged drawers, into a slender girl with auburn hair and with eyes so intensely blue that the sky of Petersburg might have envied them.

Childish games of former days, such as playing at travels, tag, and forfeits, or reading books, sitting with Kouzma or her brother Evgueny in a corner of a sofa, each with one arm thrown round the other's neck, gave her no more satisfaction. Another matter, a matter of great and vital importance, in fact, that of her first long dress, was drawing close, demanding attention.

As on some bright day in spring foreboding quivers in the air when a capricious vernal thunderstorm is approaching, so was the atmosphere in Maria Alexéevna's beginning to be fraught with romance; and she promptly took steps towards finding diversions for the young people to act as lightning-conductors and keep their thoughts from love-making.

Now there were hardly any more Sundays for Kouzma and Vania to spend with Evgueny and Nadenka in the intimacy of a close family circle, and the once warm and affectionate recollections of their childhood in the country seemed to recede ever further and further.

With lunch hardly over, the Ogloblins' flat would begin filling with young people on Sundays. Dournoff's son, quiet, shy, and modest Fedia [1] would come, and with him invariably his friend Fedor Petrovitch Berezkin, or Fofo, a foppish young man, always dripping with verses and learnedness, and who rolled his "r's" to perfection when speaking French. Evgueny was always accompanied by his chum, kindly, ruddy-cheeked Stolinikoff, ever quite ready to oblige all the world. Nadenka's Sunday guests were Annette Bolkonsky, Maria Alexéevna's niece, Sophie Meledinsky and Barbe [2] Poustchin—all friends of Nadenka's who shared her lessons and went out for walks with her, chaperoned by Mademoiselle Marjandi. These young girls represented as it were the upper set of society in Maria Alexéevna's house, and looked upon Kouzma and Vania,

[1] Diminutive of Fedor (Theodore).
[2] Barbara.

"the Cossacks," with a certain curiosity, as upon a couple of savages.

There was yet another girl in this circle of the elect who had squeezed in sideways, by the merest chance. This was Emmotchka [3] Spalte, the daughter of Nadenka's teacher of German It had been simply impossible to refuse her admittance. She was such a pretty girl with her pink and white complexion, her dainty little figure that looked as though carved in ivory, her pale-blue cherub's eyes and golden ringlets. She danced so delightfully that she was set up as an example to all the others. She had a talent for reciting poetry, and there was no one to rival her at living pictures and theatricals. Maria Alexéevna had made a wry face at first when Nadenka, who had met Emma in the street with her father, had brought her home and had made a friend of her; but she had given in in the end. After all, were not Kouzma and Vania, too, of common stock? Besides, such was the spirit of the times. Yesterday's soldiers married Bavarian princesses to-day, or yesterday's captains crowned themselves emperor, and dared to send envoys to the Emperor of Russia, asking for his sister in marriage,—and this with their own wives still living. Such, apparently, were the ways of the age; and Maria Alexéevna decided to keep up with her age.

By the time the young people had assembled, no lesser person than Monsieur Didelot, "premier maitre de ballet" of the Imperial theaters, would come driving up to the house in Dournoff's closed carriage, which was specially sent every Sunday to fetch him and his old fiddler. The young people would then all pair off, the fiddle would strike up, and the lesson, which was both a dancing-lesson and one in deportment, began. And there Kouzma Minaieff nearly always managed to get into trouble. Not that it could be said of him that he was awkward or clumsy, on the contrary, he was very dextrous and a good dancer; but in the presence of Nadenka he could never abstain from playing some boyish trick, to show off before her.

"Saperlotte! Faites donc attention!" [4] would then sound

[3] "Little Emma."

[4] Look out!

through the hall, and, trotting lightly up, the lean, wiry Monsieur Didelot would come sweeping down on the culprit.

"Ah, petit vaurien, voulez-vous rester tranquille!" [5] and he pinched Kouzma's ear. The boy kept silent, he did not even feel offended. As though a little chap of a Frenchman could ever offend him!

Didelot would drag Kouzma out into the middle of the room.

"Kouzma seul! Révérence d'un jeune homme de bonne famille! Avancez! Un, deux, trois! . . . Inclinez-vous!" [6]

These *révérences* were things he could never achieve, no matter how hard he tried. Nadenka laughed, sitting in an armchair. Maria Alexéevna looked annoyed, and disapprovingly inspected him through her *lorgnon,* and Fofo made the girls titter by mimicking his movements behind his back. Emmotchka alone looked miserable; she blushed painfully, and tears glistened in her blue eyes. Kouzma who, as a rule, was not easily put out, also seemed confused and made a hopeless muddle of his "positions," persistently starting with the wrong foot.

The dances they were taught at these lessons were the *matradour,* the *gavotte,* the *écossaise,* the *pavane,* the *allemande* and the *anglaise.*

When dancing began Kouzma at once recovered his good spirits. And when he chanced to have Nadenka for his partner, his happiness would be complete. The fiddler played a decorously coy allemande, and the couples twirled airily round and round to the rhythm of its slow-flowing tune.

For Christmas they would prepare and rehearse a *cotillon* in fancy dress with a *contredanse française.*[7] One Christmas, Vania and Catiche [8] Brylkin, whose laughing eyes looked like a couple of black raisins, represented *Childhood,* Fofo and Nadenka, dressed up as pages, impersonated *Adolescence,* Kouzma in the uniform of a Cossack Life-Guards ensign, and Emmotchka in the costume of a maid of honor, with a powdered wig

[5] Ah, little rogue, will you keep quiet!

[6] "Kouzma alone! Bow of a young man of good family! One, two, three! . . . Bow low!"

[7] French quadrille.

[8] Kate.

which made her look like a china marquise, were *Adults,* while Evgueny and Annette Bolkonsky represented *Old Age.*

This cotillon had the name of *The Four Ages,* and all four were equally bland and handsome and gay. The following year they had another *contredanse* made up of eight couples. There were Russian boyars, Swiss in Alpine costumes, Neapolitans, Scots, English sailors, Red Indians and, at Kouzma's urgent entreaty, also Cossacks. Kouzma was the Cossack and Nadenka, to his great joy, was a Cossack girl. Towards the end of the ball each pair had to perform their own national dance.

Maria Alexéevna, Dournoff, and all the other mothers and fathers sat in a row along the walls of the big hall, feasting their eyes on the young people and mentally pairing them off for life. Maria Alexéevna intended Fofo for her Nadenka and Annette Bolkonsky for Evgueny. Kouzma and Vania had to go without prospective wives. They were Cossack children, and so, naturally, they did not count.

Although treating them with the utmost kindness and benevolence, in her heart of hearts she never placed them much higher than her own serfs. And when she spoke of their father and of how he had made his way in life, she pursed up her lips and looked slightly disdainful.

"To think," she would say, "how easily *ces gens là* [9] rise nowadays! He was a common Cossack and now he is a colonel."

To this Dournoff would nod his head in sympathy.

"Such are our times," he would say. "A soldier's profession counts highest. Take Bonaparte, for example. . . ."

"Ah, but that is with the French. But the *émigrés,* people of good society, do not recognize him. Whereas here—look at Kouzma. He simply devours Nadenka with his eyes. A fine knight, indeed! . . . A page. . . . But never mind, my Nadenka is no fool."

She sighed languidly, looking at Dournoff with veiled eyes.

"I should like a diplomat for Nadenka's husband," she said. "I prefer a diplomat to any general."

[9] "That sort of people."

Screening her face with her fan so that her eyes alone were left visible, which meant: "You are a dear," she sighed once more with the air of a victim obliged to care for Cossack children.

"Let Kouzma marry Emmotchka, if he is so keen on getting a Petersburg girl. You can plainly see she is in love with him. She can't even hide her feelings, poor child. She blushes all over whenever he comes near her."

"She really is a very pretty girl."

Promptly the fan shifted its position and Dournoff read the signal for what it meant:

"You are fickle! Beware!"

Dournoff bent over Maria Alexéevna's delicate hand and cautiously kissed it behind the fan.

The last ball before Evgueny's promotion to a naval lieutenancy and Kouzma's graduation at Jacquinot's was particularly brilliant. An orchestra played. The spacious hall of Dournoff's house was ablaze with light.

The two chandeliers were lit, and candles were burning in tall sconces on the walls. Lackeys stood near them, to trim the wicks and prevent the wax from accumulating, lest it spill over on the ladies' shoulders and dresses

Fashion was stronger than political prejudice, and the guests were already dressed in the charming French fashion. The young people, as in former years, were in fancy dress.

Nadenka and her partner Fofo—Maria Alexéevna had diplomatically paired off the dancers herself—, both wore the costumes of the time of Louis XIV. Fofo, pale and thin, in a curled black wig, represented the *Roi Soleil* himself. Kouzma was in the green, gold-embroidered kaftan of the Cossacks Life-Guards of the time of Catherine the Great. Its sleeves were thrown back over the shoulders, showing the red sleeves of the under-tunic. He looked magnificent. Even proud Nadenka could not keep her eyes away from him. Emmotchka was his partner. She wore the bright costume of a Finnish peasant girl, which suited her to perfection. The other dancers watched

these two couples attentively. They were the eldest and were rumored to be as good as betrothed.

Maria Alexéevna raised melting eyes heavenwards, whispering meaningly to some of her friends:

"Ah, les mariages se font aux cieux." [10]

Evgueny in his midshipman's [11] uniform was gloomy and taciturn. He had flatly refused to wear fancy dress, and, dancing with Annette Bolkonsky by his mother's order, positively neglected his partner.

Kouzma's behavior during the *contredanse* was beyond words. He believed—though, as a matter of fact, it was far from true—that Nadenka was particularly cold and indifferent. In consequence, he kept mixing up the figures of the dance and made hopeless blunders at every step.

During the *balancez avec vos dames vis-à-vis,* Nadenka, holding Kouzma's strong hands with her delicate little fingers, whispered to him:

"Pull yourself together, Kouzia! You are spoiling the whole thing."

She went over to Fofo and then returned for a moment to Kouzma.

"Ah, why was I not at Austerlitz to perish there?" Kouzma whispered gloomily into her ear.

"Now that's silly!"

After the dances, Nadenka and Fofo were to sing a duet they had finished rehearsing just before the ball, but Kouzma forestalled them at the clavichord. He sat down, played a solemn introduction, and then suddenly broke out into a breezy song:

"Great indeed is Na-po-le-on!
He's sharp and quick and steady in the field!
Yet, willy-nilly, he must yield
To glorious Prince Bagra-ti-on!"

Maria Alexéevna went up to him, patted his curly head as she would have done to a child, and said:

[10] "Ah, marriages are made in Heaven."

[11] In the highest and last form of the Naval Corps, the cadets ranked as midshipmen.

"This is very nice, of course, Kouzma. But you ought to sing something less martial. Something for the young ladies."

"For the young ladies?" Kouzma repeated aloud. "I obey your orders, Maria Alexéevna. Here goes! This is to a certain wily and cruel young lady," he added significantly.

His strong hands swept boldly over the keys. He began to sing, and the steady flow of his pleasing, masterful baritone voice, falling into the stream of the ritornelle he played, ran on mingling with it and melting with its notes into an harmonious whole:

"My heart is sad, my soul is longing for a friend
To come and ease its load, its pain to comprehend.
My heart complains, it weeps, I know not what it craves.
A twig, from shore to shore I'm tossing on the waves. . . ."

Kouzma stopped abruptly. He rose from his stool, kicked it noisily out of his way, and left the hall.

"Indomitable Cossack!" whispered Emmotchka, enraptured, and her hot little hand, all unbeknown to herself, lay lightly on the cold hand of Evgueny, who was sitting beside her, and gave it a squeeze. He cautiously freed his hand, but the girl did not even notice it.

Nadenka and Fofo took their place at the clavichord.

"What will you sing, Nadejda Nikolaevna?" asked Fofo, sitting down on a stool and smoothing out the folds of his gold-embroidered coat.

"Kavelin's song."

Nadenka's voice quivered slightly with excitement as she began to sing:

"Why say, on taking leave: 'Farewell!'
To her you leave and whom you love,
As though on earth you could not dwell,
And bliss were nowhere but above?"

"Why don't you say instead: 'Keep well
Until we meet again and find
New happiness on earth to dwell!'
To her you love and leave behind?"

Kouzma, standing behind the door of the hall, made a gesture of despair and went away down the passage.

With the red sleeves of his under-tunic showing through the slashed sleeves of his long kaftan, and with his face aglow with emotion, Kouzma looked very handsome as he paced up and down the small, out-of-the-way room of Nadenka's old nurse Matveévna.[12] A lampada was burning in front of a large shrine with icons in a corner of the room, throwing quivering shadows on the walls. A draft of December air blew chilly from the window, where the blind had been but partly lowered and arabesques of frost patterned the panes. Wood burned and crackled in an iron stove in another corner, the iron damper clattered and through the openings of the plate showed the light of the fire, throwing little rounds of red on the ochre floor. A wooden bedstead with a puffy feather-bed and large pillows stood against one of the walls, an iron chest covered with a shaggy carpet near another. Nurse herself sat in an armchair in the corner facing the icons, lost in thought, and listening to the music and singing that could be heard coming down the passage from the hall. Big, smoke-colored Mordan, a thoroughbred Persian tomcat, a veteran of the Ogloblins' household, lay at Matveévna's feet and watched Kouzma, turning his head and following with his eyes each of the boy's steps as he paced up and down the narrow passage between Nurse's bed and the chest.

"What are you carrying on like that for?" asked Nurse. "Why play the fool? You are no more a baby, my lad! Soon you are going to be an officer and serve the Emperor. Against whom are you raging? You ought to save it all up for the French or the Turks, and not waste it all on an inoffensive young man."

"Nurse, he is a fop, a popinjay, a fool of a civilian!"

"And you count yourself mighty clever, no doubt?"

[12] Daughter of Matthew. Common people are often called by their patronymic in Russia, especially old people.

"Nurse! He is a Jacobin! Look how he walks, how he togs himself out!"

Kouzma tried to copy Fofo's walk, and to mimic his affectations.

"He can never say a word simply, as other people do, he must always do it with a grimace, a mannerism of some kind. And his clothes! My God! Of swallow-tails alone he has six! He is not more than a boy and he ought to wear colors a boy wears. But no, it must be *vert-gris* for him. Last Sunday he appeared at dinner decked out in a coat of *azur de Naples,* and in tight-fitting breeches. He wants to show off a well-shaped leg. The fool does not see he has got legs like a frog's! And his jabot, and the frills on his cuffs? He has his hair dressed *à la Titus!* He looks like an Astrakhan baa-lamb. His hair is ginger!"

"Ginger it is not. It is exactly the same color as Nadenka's. And it will grow darker with time."

That Fofo should in any way be compared to Nadenka was more than Kouzma could stand.

"Nurse! For shame! So you, too, consider him to be a human being?"

"And what else, pray, might he be? An animal?"

"That's just what he is—an animal. How dare he pay court to Nadenka?"

"And why shouldn't he? He is a nice young man; he is a nobleman and comes of an old family. He is but a boy as you say, but when he speaks French or German he just pours it out like water. He is a serious young man and people say he is in very good favor with his chiefs."

"Nurse, I must point out to you. . . ."

"And who are you, pray, that you should point out things to me?" the nurse cut him short in an angry voice. "A Cossack!"

Like one scalded with boiling water, Kouzma shot out of the room, banging the door after him. He wanted to run away and hide, but, scarcely out in the passage, he felt his hand gripped and firmly held by somebody's strong little fingers.

"Nadenka!"

"Stop that sulking, Kouzia! Better come and have a Russian dance. You and Vania, with Emmotchka and myself. All right?"

Her eyes looked kindly into his face, and Kouzma felt his anger melt away and give room to sudden gaiety.

II.

THE first period of early adolescence with its games and dancing, its calf-love and childish jealousies, was over. Life was beginning in earnest.

Six of Jacquinot's pupils, who had spent nine years under his roof, were now leaving his school, and, in order to celebrate the event with due pomp and ceremony, he was giving a dinner. Kouzma sat on his right and on his left sat Schlenger, head pupil of their form. Next to him, sitting at table in his Kirghiz robe of ceremony, was ever-giggling Prince Serbedjab-Tiumen, who had managed, during the six years he had spent at Jacquinot's boarding-school, to learn neither French nor German, nor the *manières d'un jeune homme de bonne famille,* and now, by the order of Ataman Platoff, had been attached to the Cossack Life-Guards. He worshiped Kouzma and regarded him as his model. Jacquinot's wife Emilia Victorovna and the other three pupils sat on the other side of the table.

Platon Antonovitch was simply great in his magnificence. A freshly starched jabot supported his puffy, clean-shaven cheeks, and the white lace hung down to his waistcoat. At dinner, he made a speech suited to the occasion, addressing himself to his pupils. His words, as he said, were to serve as a beacon to the newly-built ships he was launching on the stormy sea of life.

"When elderly people," Platon Antonovitch said, cautiously tapping his bulging, comfortable little tummy, and then with a graceful bow and elaborate gesture, pointing towards his wife, "are no prey to passions, when, untormented either by greed for gold and riches, or by envy and all-devouring ambition,

they enjoy the protection of a wise and firm Government which stands on watch, guarding public safety and welfare and precluding the very possibility of any daring and criminal attempt, then well they may be apt, with a calm spirit, to become almost children themselves and, like children, be gay and happy once more. As to young people" (here he swept the table with an all-comprising gesture, addressing his pupils) "their very nature must always incline them to be gay, if they but have the wisdom of not renouncing before their time the blessings of that boon, irretrievable when lost—their youth."

As once in former days the wisdom of his father's teachings, so now Kouzma also took these words to heart; and, on leaving the hospitable roof of Jacquinot's boarding-school, he did have the wisdom of not renouncing before his time his youth which, once lost, was irretrievable. And so, soon the talk about his carouses in company with the officers of his regiment, and his escapades, more than once passed beyond the precincts of his regimental quarters and became the common property of Petersburg gossip.

Nadenka? . . . He continued to be faithful to Nadenka. . . . He was her knight, her devoted page, and she alone might have been able to restrain and check him at any time with a single word, had she but chosen to do so.

But she did not choose. Why exactly she did not, would be impossible to say. Perhaps it was because the daring escapades of the dashing Cossack were to her liking; or it may be, on the contrary, she did not care very much about him.

If Kouzma gave consideration to the question of marriage —and, most probably, he did—he did not speak to anyone about it. One thing he did know, there are no married ensigns. So he waited until he might be promoted to the rank of cornet [13] and his father should redeem the promise to buy him a handsome house in St. Petersburg. He saw in his dreams how beautiful would be the home he was going to make for Nadenka and how he was going to eclipse that hateful person, Fofo, with his own splendor. He was madly jealous of Fofo. He tormented himself, he suffered, and between whiles he enjoyed

[13] First officer's rank in a Russian cavalry regiment.

life. He was sowing his wild oats, tasting youth—that boon, irretrievable when lost—in full, to the utmost capacity of his clean and candid soul.

Evgueny had finished his studies at the Naval Cadet Corps and had obtained his commission of Lieutenant on the corvette *Diana,* a vessel newly built in the Admiralty yards. The *Diana* had been commissioned to sail to foreign waters in the autumn and join the squadron there cruising under Admiral Seniavin's flag. Russia was at war with Turkey and was the ally of Imperial France. The *Diana* was, therefore, to put in for some time at the port of Brest, and, during her stay there, Evgueny was to go to Paris as messenger with confidential dispatches for the Russian Ambassador to France, Prince Alexander Kourakin. This had been arranged for Evgueny, at Maria Alexéevna's request, through the good offices of Dournoff.

Evgueny might well be proud of such splendid prospects. To get a commission on a ship about to sail on an interesting cruise and, moreover, be given the opportunity of seeing Paris where, after a long period of revolutionary insanity, life had re-awakened to luxurious florescence, was rare luck, full of the lure of novelty. Napoleon had divorced the Empress Josephine and had married the Austrian Princess Marie-Louise; now the glitter of the young court of France was enhanced by the magnificence of the old court of the Hapsburgs.

The alliance with Russia seemed to be a lasting one.

Many avenues to success were opening to the twenty-year-old lieutenant on the point of his entering life. He was tall, with a well-knit figure, handsome with a cold and dreamy beauty. Added to that, he was sufficiently wealthy. In a word, he had everything that promised him a brilliant future, and made him a desirable husband for any woman. Wise and prudent Maria Alexéevna planned to arrange his engagement to Annette Bolkonsky before he started on his cruise and visited foreign countries. But the young man was reticent and gloomy and did not accede to these plans.

III.

PARIS was glorious in those autumn days. Everything proclaimed emphatically that the Revolution had passed and an era of peaceful reconstruction set in. Life was again in full bloom. The Empress Josephine, consigned to oblivion, led a life of ennui at La Malmaison. The young Empress Marie-Louise reigned in her stead at the Tuileries. Entertainments, theatricals, balls and masquerades in Paris alternated with brilliant meets in its neighborhood, at Rambouillet, Fontainebleau and at Marshal Berthier's hunting-grounds at Gros-Bois. Paris was building and embellishing itself: it was to become a mirror worthy of reflecting Napoleon's glory.

Evgueny Ogloblin, in a round black hat, a dark-blue swallow-tail coat and pale-yellow trousers, half-boots, and a long cloak thrown over his shoulders, walked along the streets of Paris on his way to the Russian Ambassador, Prince Kourakin. Except for Brest, it was the first town of any size he had seen in Western Europe. To be in Paris at last made his brain swim.

He was walking from the Faubourg St. Antoine. On his way he had seen there the fenced-in ruins of the Bastille. Then he had crossed the Seine and now, standing on the embankment, he looked at the huge pile of Notre Dame. A whole steppe farm with its yard and outbuildings might easily have fitted within the immense structure. The dark stone of its facade was sheer lace. The monsters of stone, the gargoyles seemed alive. It was truly a marvel to him, who had never conceived of anything so vast and so exquisitely fine.

Resuming his walk, Evgueny passed the Tower of the Conciergerie, whence Marie Antoinette had once started on her way to execution. He could not help feeling somewhat ill at ease as he walked past the tall grenadier who was standing there in a bearskin cap, white breast-piece and buckskins. The man stood motionless. His gray moustache drooped down to

his clean-shaven chin, and his gray eyes glanced piercingly at the passers-by.

"I wish I could get rid of those papers soon, deliver them to Kourakin and be free," thought Evgueny, quickening his pace. Across the river the high buildings of the Tuileries stretched out in a line, the long colonnades enveloped in the low foliage of the gardens.

A little girl was singing in the gateway of a tall house. A shabbily dressed old man stood beside her, playing the violin.

"French street songs . . ." thought Evgueny. "I must listen to that.

"How strange," he went on, "how strange I should be in Paris!" Disconnected thoughts about this great and incomprehensible city shot through his brain. Sixteen years ago the mob had made a ruin of these very streets. The viragoes of Paris howled about the tumbril in which the hated and beautiful "Austrian" had ridden. The fury of revolution had striven to root out all that was connected with the past in the popular consciousness. The very word *king* had been prohibited. All this had not been so long ago. Evgueny recollected very well how his father and their neighbors had talked of the French Revolution, when the first *emigrés* had appeared in the manors of the nobility. What had remained in France of her past at that time? Even the Christian calendar had been abolished. Everything had gone to pieces, and new France had been born amid the suffering of uncounted thousands. There was no going back to the past. The entire history of a country had been struck out and stamped with the single word *tyranny*, and the dust of kings had been scattered to the winds.

The little girl to whose song Evgueny now stopped to listen, she too, no doubt, had been begotten amid the bloodshed of the streets. He looked at her. She must have been about sixteen, although she hardly looked more than a child as she stood there, pale and thin. A gold-braided red shawl covered her hair and shaded her large dark eyes.

The singer noticed the well-dressed gentleman. She took pains to pronounce the words of the song with greater care, and

the melancholy notes of the fiddle blended more harmoniously with her voice:

"Si le Roy m'avait donné
Paris sa grande ville,
Et qu'il m'eut fallu quitter
L'amour de ma mie. . . ."

The violin played the ritornelle.

"J'aurais dit au Roy Henri;
Reprenez votre Paris.
J'aime mieux ma mie.
Oh gué,
J'aime mieux ma mie." [14]

Evgueny gave the girl a few silver coins and walked on.

"Si le Roy m'avait donné . . ." he repeated to himself. "Si le Roy . . ."—and the blood of the king and his queen hardly dry on the stones of the square where they had been put to death.

A large square opened in front of him among the yellowing chestnut trees. Evgueny asked a passer-by what it was called.

"The Square of Louis XV, now the Place de la Concorde."

Evgueny crossed the bridge and reached the square. Sixteen years ago the guillotine that had beheaded the king and his queen had stood there and their innocent blood had been spilt. Had sixteen years been sufficient to wipe out the stain?

The white stones glistened in the sun. Dry leaves, carried by the wind, swept rustling over the stones as though trying to wipe them clean. Was it then, perhaps, those same leaves, from the chestnut trees whose bloom the beautiful Queen of France had once admired, that had wiped away the blood which could never have been washed off by men?

Evgueny's heart was all aquiver. It seemed to be strung with violin strings that vibrated to any impression received by his mind.

[14] Had the King made me a present of his great city, Paris, and had I to give up my own dear love, I would say to King Henry: "Take back your Paris, I prefer my love. Oh gué, I prefer my love."

It was an enormous square. People were assembling on it, and the crowd was ever thickening. A street opened up from the square and a temple could be seen at the end of the street. Its white sandstone walls were new and shone like marble. Evgueny had heard of it. Was it not strange? Unbelievers but yesterday, people who had been worshiping the Goddess of Reason, had erected this grand Christian temple,—at the word of one man. Single-handed, he had managed to reverse the mentality of millions.

Evgueny turned into the Rue de Rivoli and gave a look to his left. A high column of brass burned in the rays of the sun, and strings of figures, carved in metal on a band winding up round the column, were pressing upwards in an effort to reach the statue of Napoleon on the capital.

People were running in his direction. Evgueny looked around, and he could see how a stir ran through the crowd. Black hats and white handkerchiefs appeared above the heads. The crisp roll of drums rang out somewhere in the distance.

"Vive l'Empereur!" . . . came in a roar from the square, as though the very stones, bathed in the blood of kings as they were, were crying it out to heaven.

"Vive l'Empereur!"

A barouche, drawn by four white horses with postillions and pages, pressed as rapidly as possible through the throng.

Evgueny turned to run back to the square, but all his eye could catch was the sight of a small white parasol swaying above the crowd and rapidly disappearing toward the Champs Elysées.

"Vive l'Empereur!"

"Vive l'Impératrice!"

Helped by a sketch he had been given in St. Petersburg, Evgueny easily found the Ambassador's house. Presently the mirrors along the marble staircase reflected his black cloak and pale face as he was shown up by a lackey in powdered wig and buckled shoes, with the Russian Imperial arms embossed on the buttons of his blue kaftan and red waistcoat. On the landing,

another lackey took charge of Evgueny and showed him through a large hall to the door of the Ambassador's study.

The firmly established order of court etiquette showed in the noiseless gait and impassive faces of the flunkeys.

"Whom shall I announce?"—asked the Ambassador's personal, gray-haired attendant at the door of the study.

"Lieutenant Ogloblin from the ship *Diana,* with dispatches from St. Petersburg."

"May it please the gentleman to be seated for a moment?"

The man disappeared behind the tall door with bronze ornaments, only to return almost immediately.

"His Excellency begs you to enter."

A middle-sized, but impressive-looking old man came forward to greet Evgueny. Leaning on his gold knobbed cane, he looked attentively at the young man's face. He listened in silence to Evgueny's report and silently took the papers. Then, shuffling his feet and walking slowly, like a man suffering from gout, he went to an enormous writing-desk all ornamented with bronze, opened the packet, put on his spectacles and began to peruse the papers. Whilst he was reading, he kept shifting his eye-brows; now one would go up, then the other, then again both would appear at once bristling above the rims of his spectacles. At last he slowly removed these and laid the papers on the table.

"The answer will be ready in two or three days. I must speak to the Emperor first. You will take it then to the ship and give it to Captain Kolomyitzeff."

Prince Kourakin, moving his lips, looked fixedly at Evgueny.

"You are the son of Admiral Ogloblin and of his wife Maria Alexéevna, née Poustchin, are you not?"

"Yes, sir," answered Evgueny, drawing himself up.

"I knew both of them very well. You are very much like your mother. Your eyes are grayish-blue like hers."

The Prince stopped. He thought: "Good for you if in character too you resemble your mother. But if you take after your father, my boy, you are sure to burn your wings in Paris."

"Have you had a look at the city?"

"Just a little, sir."

"Would you like to see the Emperor and be presented to him?"

"I should consider it happiness," stammered Evgueny.

"No very great happiness that, sir," said Kourakin dryly. "You must learn to tell gold from what is only gilt. Still, you must see him, for he is in truth a remarkable man. Do you ride?"

"I do, sir."

"I have been invited to a hunt at the Prince de Neufchâtel's to-morrow. The Emperor and the Empress will be there. The invitation includes my secretary. He has been ill in bed since yesterday. Would you like to come with me in his place?"

"I should be most grateful to you, sir."

"Very well, then. . . . You will tell your mother all about it later on. You will be able to tell her that you have seen the Emperor in person. You shall wear my secretary's hunting-kit. You are of the same height. Come to dinner at six to-night; and after dinner an Imperial carriage will come to fetch us. It will take me to spend the night at the Prince de Neufchâtel's, and you to the Château de Choisy, close by,—there is not room for all the guests at Gros-Bois. The Marquis de Choisy will be your host and will see to everything. Good-bye for the present."

Evgueny went out into the street. After the calm of the Prince's study, he plunged into the noise of the streets, and, yet uncertain where to go, had taken only a few random steps when his eyes suddenly encountered the brilliant black eyes of a lady who was standing at the entrance of the next house. Evgueny looked into these eyes and could not divert his own. Was it because their lashes were unusually long and curling, or because the eyes themselves possessed some peculiar quality? Evgueny saw them as shining fires under the rim of an inverted basket, which the lady's flowered headgear resembled. She seemed to be waiting for some one. She noticed Evgueny's confused admiration, and a barely perceptible smile flitted over the Latin oval of her delicate face. Evgueny continued to stare; he was simply unable to turn his eyes away.

A carriage and pair drove up to the house. An officer in a tall shako and a dark-green uniform was sitting inside.

"André," the lady said aloud, casting a sidelong glance at Evgueny. "I have guessed right. We must go to Choisy, to our Marquis."

It was only then that Evgueny suddenly felt how boorish it was to stand there, staring at an unknown lady. He turned quickly and walked down the street.

"We must go to Choisy," he repeated her words to himself. "Could it really be the same place she meant, and is she, perhaps, going there at the same time as myself? Or are there still other places called Choisy, as there are several St. Germains? What if I see her there? If we meet at the hunt? If that is not fate, what is? What if this is the romance I have been waiting for all these years?" He tried to compare her in his thoughts to the girls and ladies he had known in St. Petersburg, and knew at once that she was peerless.

"A Parisian," he muttered aloud.

IV.

THE weather was as any huntsman might wish for a day with the hounds. Early in the morning there had been fog. The thin autumn foliage of the trees seemed transparent and moisture dripped from the leaves like tears. The horizon was still milky with mist and looked, in the half-light, like a delicate tracery upon china. The sky was gray in the early hours, but one could sense an invisible sun behind that grayness. The air was clear. Sounds carried far, and when a dog barked in the village two miles away from the park, its bark sounded near.

The Marquis de Choisy came out of the main entrance of his château. He wore a white silk waistcoat with six glass buttons, white buckskins and hunting boots, and neither coat nor hat. The shutters of the facade behind him were still closed, but footsteps and young voices came from behind them. His guests were apparently rising.

The Marquis stood on the stone steps for some time. Stretching, he took a deep breath and smiled. His youth had come back to him. He remembered other times, other hunts . . . Versailles . . . Fontainebleau. . . . Could it really be that all that had come back?

He went down into the park and, following a path that had been trodden across a lawn by the servants, took a short cut to the stable-yard.

Life was astir there. Grooms were taking horses out of the long stone-building into the flag-paved yard.

Perceiving the Marquis, the head groom came forward. Water was pouring into a stone trough. A trooper of the Chasseurs-à-cheval, in his shirt-sleeves and service trousers, was filling a pail of water. It was the orderly of the Marquis's son, who was an officer in the Chasseurs-à-cheval.

"Had a good rest, Léon?" the Marquis asked.

"Very good, sir, thank you, sir," answered the orderly, still holding the pail.

"Had your breakfast?"

"We have just finished."

"How are the horses?"

"They are quite rested. The Lieutenant's Mimiche has had her feed of oats. She is feeling frisky."

The Marquis turned to the head-groom.

"Thomas," he said, "we must add three more horses to the number we made out yesterday. Réville and his sister arrived last night, and quite late, the secretary of the Russian Ambassador."

"The Révilles have had their own horses sent here, sir, and I shall choose a quiet one for the secretary from among the former royal horses."

"Has the fanfare been sounded?"

"We have not heard it yet, but it won't be long now. You ought to get ready, sir. Do not worry about things here. All will be done as it must be. As it was done in the time of the late King."

"Sh-sh. . . ." de Choisy stopped him with a wave of his hand, walking away to the château.

The wonderful joy of morning was unfolding all around. Openings like enormous sky-lights appeared above, and vivid blueness shone though the white veil of the mist. The distant vistas grew clearer. A rhythmical gurgling sound came from the lawn in front of the house. Three cast-iron dolphins with their open jaws pressed against a stone pillar were supporting a cast-iron basin on their curved-up tails. In the middle of the basin stood the figure of a woman holding a pitcher pressed to her bosom. The cold jet of a fountain spouted upwards from the pitcher.

The Marquis walked slowly through the park. In the course of the long years of his exile in England, he had developed the habit of early walks. "Certainly," he mused, "that lad is by no means what our royal soldiers used to be. There is no true discipline in the man, no sense of subordination. He knows who I am. Yet did he in any way show he understood it was the Marquis de Choisy—Colonel of the Royal Guard,—whom he addressed? A de Choisy, whose family were Marquises at the time of Louis le Saint! Not he! He might at least have set down his pail and saluted."

Following the windings of a path, whose rustling carpet of leaves led him between old chestnut trees and past a wide-spread bluish thuya, the Marquis descended to where a group of willows let down their long garlands to the dark mirror of a pond. A small stream slid over an artificial cascade into the pond. Two black water-hens, disturbed by his approach, swam into the rushes. A wood-pigeon was cooing softly high up in a lime tree, and thrushes were melodious on all sides. A stone bench that stood under a lime tree close by the water was all covered with moss and lichen. Ivy spread glossy and black in ragged patches between the tree trunks. Dead branches lay scattered. The Marquis could not help noticing these tokens of neglect, and it was suddenly brought home to him that he was but an "ex-marquis" and "ex-colonel," and that until quite recently he had still been an emigré. "However, I did well," he thought, "to come here when Napoleon was but Consul. I was the first to return. I went to see those useful to know. I made my bow before those in power and soon they could not do without me.

Would Napoleon have been able to stage his coronation as he did without me, the Marquis de Choisy? Josephine, certainly, also helped him a good deal. But then she, too, belongs to our old nobility. Her former husband was a Beauharnais. Her father was Tascher de la Pagerie, Governor of the Island of Martinique. They knew what etiquette was. Yes, I did well to return. What is the use of all those others still staying abroad, in Russia, Bavaria, Saxony, England, and waiting for something to turn up? What is it they are waiting for? What is the good of Count de Sabo baking patties in Portsmouth and selling them in the streets to drunken English sailors? I invited him to come with me. 'No,' he said, 'I shall not return until the Bourbons are once more kings in France. I cannot serve the impostors who once executed my King.' Go and find them now, those Bourbons! Louis XVIII has become a vagabond king. Now he has left Mitau for England. He does not hit it off with any one. He is old, sick and flabby. Why should not Napoleon be Emperor after all?"

And, not for the first time, he winced at the recollection of how Napoleon, crowning himself Emperor, had put the crown on his head himself and had then crowned the Empress Josephine.

"Without God's blessing. . . . Not, as before, by the grace of God, but by the will of his own mortal self," thought the Marquis as he rounded the pond and entered an avenue of shade. White acacias, hazel trees and young elms grew so closely here that they formed a vault, which was now turning yellow, above his head. A fragrant freshness filled the dusk of the avenue. Little gray rabbits jumped up from almost under his very feet and noiselessly disappeared, with a flicker of white tail, into the underbrush.

"To him," the Marquis mused, "God counts as long as God is necessary to him. Were the Pope to cross his wishes, he would simply have him deposed and a Pope of his own put on the throne instead. Yet, one must admit that he is not against religion. Take, for instance, the new Young Girls' Institute at Ecouen. The principles on which it has been founded are excellent. He not only fights the mentality of the Jacobins, he

even goes against Voltaire. With his own hand he wrote it: 'All education must be based on the Gospel. I want good and virtuous women, of spotless morals and kind of heart, not nimble-witted hussies, to leave this Institute.' He has ordered prayers to be said regularly there. He insists that the girls should attend mass and study the Catechism. They are to be taught a little science and much needle-work. That is quite right. However, I should say that there he even overreaches the mark. We French are no Puritans after all. 'I do not wish to educate women of fashion,' he says, 'but women for poor and modest families. The mother of a poor family is the guardian of the whole household. The best education for a girl is that which prepares her to be a good mother.'

"That's all very well, of course, but, on the other hand, atheism runs rampant in his army. And then, the doings at the Military School of Fontainebleau! They all are not a shade better than sansculottes there. And the regiments? True, a halo of glory shines over it all. Ulm and Austerlitz are worth something. On the colors of the 23rd Regiment, just conferred on them by the Emperor himself, the legend reads: 'The Emperor of the French, to the 23rd Regiment of Chasseurs-à-cheval,' with '23' in laurel wreaths in the corners. That is all. God, the Holy Virgin, the emblems of France, have been clean left out. On their sabretaches they have the imperial Roman, single-headed eagle in a gold wreath of laurel and oak-leaves. But then, what's wrong with it after all? Why should it be worse than the lilies of the Bourbons? And, when one comes to think of it, those lilies have not been quite what one could call spotless latterly."

The Marquis de Choisy sighed. He felt estranged from what the army was now. He felt much more drawn towards the emblems of the old colors,—the royal lilies, the Holy Virgin, and the Latin texts taken from the Gospels.

His mind now turned to another problem, the most grievous of all—his son's assiduous attentions to Germaine Réville, sister of one of his fellow-officers, and the no less painful question of his daughter Yvonne's showing unmistakable signs

of affection for Germaine's brother, the brilliant cavalry lieutenant André Réville.

The Marquis was nearing the end of his habitual walk. The path had become much narrower. It ran between low hedges of box and was overgrown with broom and juniper.

"Germaine Réville . . . to think that these Révilles are, after all, but a family of common joiners from Choisy. When people were pulling down the Bastille, Germaine's father and uncle went off to Paris. They were in the crowd who applauded the execution of the King. Their hands are stained with the blood of kings. And now—my son wants to become a member of that family. That is where lies the horror of our return."

As a rule, the Marquis did his best not to see "horror" anywhere; but his wife, the Marquise Thérèse, in compensation, saw little else but horror in all things. To tell the truth, what they had found on their return did not look much like horror. Their estate had remained almost intact. Paris was growing more beautiful every day. Workmen were busy all over the town; new streets were laid out; bricks and stones, heaped in piles, stood everywhere. The Cathedral of St. Denis was enclosed in scaffolding; the Pantheon was being repaired; and the worship of Ste. Geneviève was restored to its ancient dignity. Triumphal arches to commemorate recent victories were being built in the Place de l'Etoile and the Place du Carrousel. An enormous column had been erected in the Place Vendôme; stone bridges were being built in memory of Iena and Austerlitz. Artisans were working at the huge building of the Exchange. The Louvre was under repair; its galleries were filled with pictures and statues brought as war trophies from Italy.

"The 'Little Corporal' respects the beauty of the past, you can't deny him that," thought the Marquis. "To-day's hunt, too, at Gros-Bois, in historical coats and three-cornered hats, with officers from the Versailles riding-school taking part, although arranged by the new proprietor of the château, Berthier, Prince de Neufchâtel, is the Emperor's own idea and is brought into operation for him. All this is very fine. Only the people who are present are not the same."

When the Marquis had come back to France he had found no Frenchmen there. Those former Frenchmen who had been near and dear to his heart, whom he had understood and who had understood him, were no more. There was a Court and there were courtiers, there was a strict etiquette, but the delicate refinement of Court life was missing. Like a cold draft in a warm hot-house, gusts of rough and ready militarism made themselves felt everywhere, and there was much in it that smacked of regicidal sansculottes.

Most painful of all for the Marquis was to see that his children decidedly failed to perceive that anything was wrong. They liked the rough officers without quarterings. They admired their gold-embroidered uniforms and jackets and worshiped Napoleon who had given them all this after the horrors and violence and bloodshed of the Revolution.

The Marquis had reached the esplanade in front of the château. On its smooth, gravel-strewn square, horses were now standing, saddled and ready to mount, and two large open carriages with a tandem of four horses each, were drawn up before the entrance.

The Marquis asked Thomas where the Marquise and the guests were.

"They are waiting on the park terrace to hear the fanfare," answered Thomas.

A large stone terrace ran all the length of the château on the side of the park, two flights of steps, like those of the Château of Fontainebleau, descending from it in a semi-circle to the green lawn with the fountain.

The terrace was filled with a smart crowd. Ladies in long and heavy habits of rich colored velvet, huntsmen in pink and gold, officers in the uniforms of their horse regiments, with pompons or plumes on their headgear, surrounded the light iron railings like a beautiful wreath.

Ogloblin would have felt lost amid this crowd of strangers, if the daughter of the house had not taken charge of him. When he had come down to the huge dining-room that morning and had presented himself to the mistress of the house, he had

not failed to notice at once, among those sitting at breakfast, that pair of black eyes that had struck him the day before in Paris. It seemed as though their owner, too, had recognized him. She had ceased to talk to the fair-haired girl who was the daughter of the house and had kept glancing in his direction.

He could not shake off a persistent thought which had possessed itself of him. What if this second meeting betokened just that secret will of fate, that finger of destiny of which he had often been thinking of late in Russia? He felt at once that he was in love with this stranger. It was as though some wave had lifted him off his feet and he was being carried along on its crest. Yesterday he had been in love with Paris and with Napoleon. This morning, when he had looked out of his window and had seen the transparent mellow vistas and the far-off forests melting away in the mist, he had fallen in love with France. But now, the whole of France had taken shape for him in this girl.

Indeed, everything in her was so perfectly French. The delicate oval of her face, her finely chiselled nose, her beautifully curved lips, and the severe contour of a chin just a trifle too long. All this was as though illumined from within by the light that shone through her black eyes and which had conquered him from the first. She was tall and slender, and the hand in which she held a little piece of bread was irreproachably modelled. Beside this girl's beauty, the calm fairness of the daughter of the house, who slightly reminded him of his sister Nadenka, seemed to fade and lose its charm.

"Maman," the fair-haired girl said across the table to her mother. "Won't you introduce 'Monsieur le Secrétaire de l'Ambassadeur de Russie' to us? He knows nobody here, and we shall take him under our protection."

As Evgueny bent low before the young ladies in a *révérence d'un jeune homme de bonne famille,* he felt his heart pounding.

At that moment the château of the Marquis de Choisy was to him the king's palace, and the ladies and gentlemen seated round the table were personages that had stepped out of one of the fairy-tales which Mademoiselle Marjandi used to tell him in

his childhood. His only fear was to appear ridiculous. But he was far from being that. His light auburn hair and dreamy gray-blue eyes, his faultless French and well cut clothes, had at once attracted the attention of the ladies.

"My daughter, Yvonne de Choisy," said the Marquise; and, having acknowledged his bow, Yvonne, in her turn, indicated, with a graceful gesture of her hand, the dark-haired girl of the encounter.

"Germaine Réville," she said. "My best friend and a true Parisian."

"We have already met! *Monsieur le Secrétaire* by chance, I saw you near the Ambassador's house yesterday," said a musical voice.

The blood hammered at Evgueny's temples, and a crowd of thoughts flashed through his brain. He suddenly recollected his sister Nadenka and how, on the eve of his leaving Petersburg, she had been singing old-time couplets at an evening party given by the Bolkonskys.

"Every land is Paradise with thee" . . . the refrain of one of the couplets had run, and presently another ditty shot through his mind, and he believed he could still hear the husky voice of the girl he had heard singing the day before in the streets.

"J'aurais dit au Roy Henri:
Reprenez votre Paris,
J'aime mieux ma mie. . . ."

Evgueny had no answer ready to Germaine's words. He stood bereft of speech. "Any land is Paradise with thee . . ." kept beating in his head. He felt he ought to say something, but words did not find their way to his tongue, and he only bowed without saying anything.

To his relief, just then the old Marquis said in a loud voice:

"Ladies and gentlemen, we should go on the terrace. Any moment now the fanfare for the meet may sound."

The mist was still curling in the valley of the brook of Réveillon. The tops of willows, like gray shadows, were rising up above the white of its shroud. All was clear and distinctly visible on the hills. The thin leaves of the yellow lime trees

looked as though made of gold foil. The roofs of the village of Choisy glistened as though varnished.

The Marquis was making his way through the crowd of guests.

"What! You are not yet ready?" exclaimed the Marquise. "They are going to sound the fanfare. It is for you to answer."

"I'll be ready in a minute, I have only got to put on my coat. I had to have a look at the horses, hadn't I?"

A few minutes later he came out in a pink gold-braided hunting-coat, a large brass hunting-horn hanging over his shoulder.

Germaine stood beside Evgueny, trying to pull a gauntleted glove onto her little hand. She frowned with the effort and her black eye-brows jutted over her eye-lashes, which only added to the piquancy of her looks.

"Have you long been secretary to the Russian Ambassador?"

Evgueny was unable to lie to her.

"No. To say the truth, I only came here in his place. I . . ."

"Wait. . . . Listen."

The guests on the terrace had stopped talking to listen to the faint sounds of the horn that came from the depths of the milky fog. The Marquis strained his ears. Then, turning to his wife, he said, beaming all over his ruddy face:

"Of course . . . I guessed right."

He tried to catch the sound. His old face looked solemn and at the same time full of fun. His thick nether lip slightly pushed forward as, turning to the Marquise, he hummed in an undertone to the distant notes of the horn:

"Du grand Condé chantons la gloire,
Il fut bon prince et vaillant chasseur." [15]

"What else is there they might have played to suit the occasion better?"

From where the gray belfry of an old church stood towering

[15] Let us sing the glory of the great Condé. He was a good Prince and a valorous hunter.

above the neighboring village, another horn rang out, continuing the melody of the distant fanfare.

"Son nom est gravé dans l'histoire,
Et sur l'airain, au temple de l'honneur." [16]

hummed the Marquis.

The sound had almost died, echoing in the woods, when the Marquis seized his horn and exclaimed:

"I know the answer to give them. De Croy, Talleyrand, Merci d'Argenteuil, Brigaud, Girardin, all our own people, are there. Let them listen."

And, puffing out his cheeks, he began to play the roulades of an old royalist song, while the Marquise, bending to her daughter's ear, sang in low tones, following the notes of the horn:

"La chasse, le vin et les belles
Etaient le refrain de Bourbon.
Il rencontra peu de rebelles
Et trouva toujours le vin bon." [17]

The horns called to one another in the morning mist. The sound was borne from château to château, announcing the joyful day of the hunt. It traversed the woods which stood in their bright autumn array, bringing apprehension to the old, experienced stags and foxes and hares. And on hearing these sounds, the inmates of the woods sought deeper still to hide in the thickets and buried themselves in bracken and dry leaves, hoping in vain that there they would not be found by the hounds.

[16] His name is engraved in history and on bronze tablets in the temple of glory."

[17] "The hunt, wine and beautiful women
Were the burden of Bourbon's song.
He met but few cruel ladies,
And always found the wine good."

V.

THE cavalcade of newcomers poured through the wide gates between the railings and the low buildings of the castle-guard behind them. A broad avenue ran between two double rows of young chestnuts to the white and pink, tower-flanked Chateau de Gros-Bois. Its vast green courtyard, framed in wide spreading oaks and mottled plane trees, was full of hunting chars-à-bancs, groups of officers in their becoming uniforms and horsewomen in red coats and three-cornered hats. The terrace also was full of richly dressed persons. A barouche with four horses harnessed *à la Daumont* with a postillion on the left shaft-horse and another in front, stood at the right side of the steps which led to the entrance to the château. Immediately in front of them, a dark-colored Turk in a white turban, a red jacket with gold chevrons and long, dark-blue trousers, was holding a light-gray Arab stallion by his bridle. The crimson saddle had no horsecloth, nor were there any holsters. Both the reins, which were of patent leather, were loosely thrown on the horse's neck, the Turk holding them but slightly in his hand. The stallion stood statuesquely, with his hind-legs apart and his fore-legs close together. He had thrown back his tail and his small, noble head was proudly raised. He seemed to know whom he was about to carry and to feel that the attention of all this brilliant crowd was centered upon him.

Autumn sunlight played on the lace and gold braid of the men's coats and was reflected in the animated eyes of the women.

Germaine rode up and reined in her horse not far from the terrace. Evgueny was beside her. His first confusion had passed, and he listened as she gaily explained that the gray stallion was *Désiré,* Napoleon's chosen mount and his war companion. Several relays of horses were waiting for him in different places of the forest. The Emperor was very fond of hunting, and he had changed his horse no less than five times during the last hunt at Rambouillet. The Turk who was holding Désiré was Roustam the Mameluke, Napoleon's favorite and

devoted servant. The barouche with the white horses was waiting for the Empress Marie-Louise.

"They say that the Empress is expecting a child. Anyway, she prefers driving. The Empress Josephine used to follow the hunt on horseback."

A strange feeling came over Evgueny as his eye took in this picture. He had left Russia thinking to find a country shattered by the Revolution, and he met with opulence, luxury and splendor. On his way to France he had been conscious of contempt and disdain for Bonaparte, and he had been certain that his court would be a poor affair, an insignificant and unpleasant sham. Here he beheld a sumptuousness worthy of a true sovereign, and a court refulgent with the splendor of royal tradition.

The finest names of old France sounded in his ears, as Germaine said, pointing out some of the women who stood waiting for the Empress: "This is Madame de Ségur, lady-in-waiting to her Majesty. That other lady, with the gray hair, is Madame de Turenne. That languorous-looking brunette there who is laughing and talking to a general, is Madame de Colbert. The pretty little lady with the pink face is Madame de Montmorency. Monsieur de Montesquieu, gentleman of the Bed-Chamber, is standing beside her."

Suddenly the chatter of voices was hushed. The folding glass-doors of the château opened wide. Handsome pages came running out to the terrace, and stood in a line on the staircase. All eyes were fixed on the door. The silence was so tense that every word was distinctly audible.

"You have forgotten the gloves, sir," an old attendant hastily whispered to a page who held a black, three-cornered hat and a whip in his hands. The boy took the gloves from the man and posted himself at the door, stretching himself upwards until it seemed that his waist, which was as slender as a girl's, was going to snap.

"That page there is de Crillon; he belongs to a very old family," Germaine whispered to Evgueny.

The Emperor came out of the glass door and stopped on the terrace, letting his eye run over the picture the meet offered

with its finery and variety of color. With an abrupt gesture and without looking at the page, he took the hat and gloves from him and put the hat on his head. Then he began pulling on his gloves. To-day he was not in hunting kit, but wore a dark-green uniform with white facing and a white waistcoat. He was followed by the tall, lean figure of the owner of the chateau, General Berthier, Prince de Neufchâtel, who was likewise not in huntsman's dress, but wore a long, dark-blue coat with facings and a collar so high that it partly covered his ears. Prince Kourakin walked at his side.

"Prince," Napoleon turned to Kourakin. "You must not ride with the hunt. I understand how trying it must be for you with your gout."

Kourakin bowed respectfully.

"We have not yet finished our talk. I shall start off the hunt and come back. We must have everything discussed and thoroughly cleared up. And then I must go back to Paris. Emperors may not hunt whenever they like." Napoleon looked round. "The Empress has not yet come down?"

Madame de Turenne, the lady-in-waiting, approached and said something, bowing low before the Emperor.

"Very well!" Napoleon answered with a frown, and he walked along the terrace to where, below in the courtyard, the head huntsman and his whips were keeping order among a pack of eighteen sturdy, long-eared stag-hounds. The Marquis de Choisy was also there. All bared their heads.

"Where have you got those hounds from?" asked Napoleon. Berthier turned his big head, and Evgueny could plainly see the parting in the middle of his thick, curly hair and study his face with the warts under his right eye and on his left cheek, as the general bowed, answering in a dull and colorless voice:

"It is the old pack of King Louis. Not the whole of it, of course. Most of the hounds are rather the descendants of the King's hounds."

"How did you manage to keep them?"

"I have had nothing to do with it. It was Barras. He managed to keep everything. The head huntsman and the whips also are the old ones."

"And where was the pack in Moreau's time?"

"Moreau took no interest in them. He lived quite by himself in the château and did not interfere, and so the kennel continued to exist."

"Yes. . . . How many proprietors has the château had in so short a time! Louis . . . Barras . . . I remember how upset the man was on the 18th Brumaire. I even had a hundred grenadiers sent to him to guard the château. Then came Moreau, and now, you, my dear Berthier. Yet the hounds are still the same. They have outlived everybody and they will probably also outlive both you and me. . . ."

A courtier reported that the Empress was coming.

Napoleon went to meet the Empress. He respectfully kissed her hand and led her to the carriage.

Thin and slender, pale, with the face of a child and the long pointed Hapsburg nose, with thin lips and eyes of a faded blue, she slowly walked beside Napoleon. She was not pretty, but very young. The lady-in-waiting helped her into the carriage and arranged the folds of her dress. The barouche drove away, making room for other carriages. Napoleon mounted his horse. The retinue hurriedly got on theirs. The Emperor, walking his horse towards the hunt, went past Germaine and Evgueny.

The stream of horsemen in the Emperor's wake separated the young people, and Evgueny found himself riding beside the Marquis, behind the hounds. The Marquis waved his hand from afar to an old man in hunting dress, and the latter rode up to him. It was de Girardin, Master of the Imperial Hunt.

"Well, Girardin?" said the Marquis in a loud voice. "Still on your old Princess, I see?"

"Yes, she is a faithful old thing."

"But not as fast as she used to be."

Girardin smiled contemptuously.

"Neither are the hounds for that matter, my dear fellow. . . . They are not what they used to be at the time of the King. Marengo and Rainfort are young hounds, there is not much to say against them. But Chevrette remembers the King, I believe. To tell you the truth, when I go out hunting with His Majesty,

everything seems to be as it ought to, I keep everything in order as I used to in the time of the King. Yet I always have the feeling that somehow it is not the real thing. The real thing—has been."

"Yes, the old times have gone for good. Everything is different now. Well, shall we throw off the hounds?"

"I think we should wait a little, until Her Majesty gets to the poplar avenue."

"Are you sure the stag will turn that way?"

"I have given orders to have the side clearings barred. We shall make him pass here and get out into the forest of Lagrange. The real thing will begin there."

"But the Emperor is in a hurry."

"All right. Let us throw them off then. Do you remember how the clergy used to bless the hunt in the King's time?"

"Of course I do, my dear fellow. Alas! It is not done nowadays."

Germaine put her little hand on Evgueny's arm. She had unexpectedly come riding up behind him. Evgueny started, turned round, and a happy smile lit up his face.

"His Majesty won't hunt to-day. The real hunt will begin after the change of covert is sounded. It would only mean uselessly tiring yourself out, if you go on galloping here. Let us rather go back to the château and wait there for the signal. Meanwhile I will try to give you an idea of what life is like here."

"How subtle she is," thought Evgueny, and looked into the face of Germaine. She positively liked this Russian. She read such devotion in his eyes and such readiness to obey her in everything, that she even felt a little frightened. She smiled.

The hunt had already started and had disappeared into the forest when they rode up to the château. A chasseur took charge of their horses. Gracefully holding up the long skirt of her riding-habit, Germaine went on in front. Evgueny followed. They went round to the south facade of the château. It was warm there. Quite close to the wall, amid a cluster of shrubbery which had not yet lost its summer garb, stood as though in a

bower a garden-seat hidden from view. Just above it, one of the tall first-floor windows stood wide open.

"Let us sit here," said Germaine, letting herself sink down on the seat with a supple movement. "We shall hear very well from here when the hunt changes coverts and real sport begins in the clearings. You told me you are not the Ambassador's secretary. Who are you?"

In a burst of the warm and confiding frankness of his young years, Evgueny answered:

"I am a naval officer, Mademoiselle. Three days ago, I came to Paris with dispatches of the greatest importance. When I was at our Ambassador's yesterday, he offered me the pleasure of accompanying him here in lieu of his secretary."

"Does the Ambassador know you?"

"He knew my parents very well."

"Then he knows he can trust you?"

"He does. He told me yesterday I should have to take some important papers back to the ship, when he had seen the Emperor and spoken with him."

"What a pity for you! So you will stay only a few days in Paris?"

"It can't be helped. Duty calls."

"And will your duty allow you to come to see me? I am giving a small party to-morrow in my little salon. I can promise you will not regret it if you come. There will be interesting people, attractive ladies."

"Oh, Mademoiselle! Compared to you!" warmly exclaimed Evgueny.

"Do you know Paris, at least a little?"

"Very little. Only the Seine and the Tuileries, I think."

Germaine began to draw on the sand with her whip.

"I will explain how you are to find me. This is the Seine . . . here are the Tuileries . . . here is the Pont Neuf."

"How beautifully you draw! One might think you had had lessons in topography."

A smile stole over Germaine's face. There was something both sad and evil in that smile. Evgueny saw only the sadness.

"You will cross the Seine here. . . . This is the Rue des

Saints Pères. There is a long narrow street there, the Rue du Bac. Follow it on the right. Count the houses as you go. In the courtyard of the twenty-first house from the Seine is a young chestnut tree. To the right of it is a small entrance. We—my brother and I—are on the second floor, on the left side of the landing. At two to-morrow. Will you come?"

Evgueny was going to thank her, but she stopped him, suddenly putting her finger to her lips. Voices could be heard coming through the window. Someone in the room had apparently come close to the window. They heard a sonorous, agreeable baritone:

"The Emperor Alexander has lost his affection for me. He is surrounded by ill-wishers who have been making it their business to plant suspicion in his heart. It has never been in my thoughts to start a war with him; it is not I who desire it. His armies. . . ."

The speaker had turned away from the window. Germaine and Evgueny could hear his footsteps and somebody answering in a cooing voice.

"Why . . . it is His Majesty!" whispered Germaine. "And Prince Kourakin is with him."

She pronounced the Russian surname correctly and with the right accent.

They did not dare to move. They remained sitting, half hidden by the green foliage of the bushes, and, stern and vehement, inspiring fear, snatches of the dialogue on which depended the fates of thousands, continued to reach them through the window above.

The Emperor and the Russian Ambassador were walking up and down the long room, mechanically stopping at the window for a few moments every time before resuming their walk.

"However, I am not going to make you believe that I am not arming," said Napoleon, standing at the window and absently looking down into the park. He was silent for a little while, gazing into the greenish-yellow distance. Then he added with warmth: "I am obliged to do it. Your own considerable armaments, which you will not admit and try to keep secret. . . ."

They once more went to the farther end of the hall, and

when they returned to the window, it was Prince Kourakin's soft bass which was heard:

"I have had no information to that effect and I have no knowledge of those movements of our troops that Your Majesty has been pleased to mention; but if they actually have been taking place, I continue to surmise, as I have repeatedly told the Duke of Cadore [18] and the Duke of Bassano,[19] Your Majesty's ministers, that they are but measures taken by our authorities for the home organization of our army."

"I know that you have received important papers," said Napoleon, and they resumed their walk. The conversation was growing louder. Napoleon was reproaching Kourakin, gradually raising his voice, and when they once more came to the window, it was again the Russian Ambassador's voice that calmly, but emphatically, said:

"I am able to offer Your Majesty at this very moment the most convincing assurances of friendship on the part of my master, the Emperor Alexander. His Majesty is not scheming against you. Nothing can cause him to waver in his firm intention to keep to his alliance with France. But when rumors coming from Europe threaten Russia with war, His Majesty cannot and must not forbear from taking precautionary measures. Your Majesty yourself . . ."

The speakers walked away once more.

"We ought to rise and go away," thought Evgueny. "We have no right to listen to secrets of state."

But he was unable to leave his seat. Germaine sat closely pressed to him. Her black eyes were shining, reflecting her inward excitement, and her hand, as though accidentally, held Evgueny's. He felt the warmth of her little palm, the delicate perfume of the scented kid glove, and he had not the strength to rise. He listened to what was being said in the room above his head, scarcely able to grasp its meaning. His head went round. He knew only that it was a secret, but a secret which he shared with Germaine, and the knowledge of this was both

[18] The Duke of Cadore, Monsieur de Champagny.

[19] The Duke of Bassano, Monsieur Maret, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

sweet and upsetting. Besides, to move was dangerous. They might betray themselves. The speakers might hear their steps. Kourakin might see and recognize him, and this would be worst of all.

The conversation upstairs was waxing hotter. In their excitement, the two speakers had apparently quickened the pace of their walk. They came to the window more frequently, but did not stay there as long now. Only short phrases reached Evgueny's ears.

"Listen, Prince!" said Napoleon angrily. "From all you say I simply see that the secrets of your Government are kept from your knowledge. You only repeat what they write to you, but you know nothing of the real decisions already taken in St. Petersburg."

They could hear Napoleon's firm tread on the parquet floor, all out of step with Kourakin's shuffle.

"You threaten me. I have never been afraid of threats," Napoleon's voice, full of wrath, reached them from the farther end of the hall. "It is you who want war. I do not want it," he said, now standing once more at the window. "Very well—you shall have war. We shall ruin what has still been left unruined of Europe. We shall spill much blood. Once more we shall make humanity suffer. But what will either of us gain by it?"

The voices died away and were not heard again for some time. The moment seemed propitious for getting up and making one's exit unobserved. Evgueny wanted to rise, but the little hand kept him back.

"Wait," said Germaine so low, that Evgueny not so much heard as guessed by the movement of her lips what she meant.

Napoleon and Kourakin were once more at the window. They had come up to it swiftly and evidently had not been talking. They remained standing in silence, and for some time nothing could be heard except the nervous slapping of the Emperor's glove against his thigh. At last Napoleon's voice, which was almost calm now,—he had evidently recovered his self-command,—could be heard saying:

"The Emperor Alexander has ceased to care for me. He

has forgotten what he owes me. He doesn't wish to remember that ten days after the battle of Friedland I might have been in Vilna to restore,—what you are so much afraid of,—the Kingdom of Poland. Let us call things by their name. The Duchy of Warsaw is a matter of annoyance to you. You want to seize it."

"Nothing of the kind, Your Majesty. I can vouch for that."

"You may say whatever you like, Prince; my opinion remains the same. You know nothing of the intentions of your Government. Their secrets are a closed book to you."

The voices had receded. For a long time, Napoleon and Kourakin remained talking at the other end of the hall, and Evgueny could hear by the tone of his voice that Napoleon's irritation was rising.

When, at length, they returned to the window, the Emperor was almost shouting, and the slaps of his glove on his thigh were becoming still louder as he said:

"You want the Duchy of Warsaw! You want Danzig! I know you want them. You are just looking out for some flimsy pretext to begin war, and you hope that by war you will get all you want. But I repeat it, if the Emperor Alexander listens to insidious advice and desires to fight, I am ready. I am arming; I have told you I am, and I shall go on arming. At the first news of hostile movements on the part of your troops, I shall mount my horse. It is not war I have got to learn! War, campaigns, victories have made me what I am. If you invade the lands of the Union of the Rhine, beware! Don't underestimate my forces. You let yourself be deceived by false reports, representing them as entirely tied up by the war with Spain. I shall take the field against you with four hundred thousand men. If need be I shall raise more."

There was a lull. Then Napoleon spoke again; his voice was once more calm.

"I see, Prince, that with your gout it is difficult for you to walk or to stand. Let us sit down. If the Emperor lays such great weight upon it, I am ready to re-establish the Duke of Oldenburg in his duchy. But what will he gain by it? He will

be crushed down by the French custom-house system. He will be a permanent apple of discord between Russia and France."

Their voices died away once more. Then there was the sound of armchairs being moved, and it became impossible to make out what Napoleon said and what Prince Kourakin answered.

From the main gates on the other side of the park came the sonorous blare of a horn.

"That's the signal for change of coverts. The stag has entered the forest of Lagrange. Let us go now," whispered Germaine.

They hurriedly left their green shelter and went round the château to the courtyard, where the chasseur was waiting with their horses. Neither of them spoke of what they had heard. It was as though they had made a tacit vow of silence.

When they emerged from the yellow and orange tangle of bracken with birch trees growing here and there, where the eye could reach far but could see nothing underfoot, and the presence of the hounds could only be guessed by the rustling and moving of fronds, a wide valley lay before them. To the left, a road curved down to a narrow bridge and crossed a small stream. Spreading elms, all rusty gold, grew near the bridge. A flight of rocks was circling above them, forming a moving network in the sky. A file of carriages was descending from the forest. In front, red-coated postillions rode the steaming white horses of the Empress's barouche. The forest broke off over a ravine sloping down in terraces to the stream, on the banks of which grew stumpy willows. Over the fields of rich, plowed soil, over the bright emerald of the meadows which now lay steaming under the midday sun, between rows of apple trees, the hunt was streaming down to the brook. The whole of the slope was speckled with splashes of gold and silver and radiant color. The pack had scattered over the meadow, nosing for the lost scent. The hounds, with their tails up like sabers, were run ning about, their noses close to the grass. The Marquis de Choisy and the whips were hallooing and calling to the dogs.

Germaine rode a reddish-roan mare, a tall and bony, rough-

limbed animal with a wide blaze to her fine head. Evgueny's horse was a bay pony with an ordinary trooper's saddle which had a horse blanket tied round its frame for a seat; and, although far from enjoying his gallop through the forest on such a mount, he bravely kept up with his companion, who was boldly riding down to the brook, her sparkling eyes searching the hillside opposite for the stag.

"There he is!" she exclaimed, pointing with her whip to the opposite bank, and galloped down the steep declivity to the ford.

Just then, the Marquis de Choisy blew the horn, calling the hounds and laying them on the stag, which was now in full view. The hunt, which that momentary halt on the slope had threatened to throw into confusion, came to life again at once. It moved and swept on in accordance with the individual temperaments of the horsemen, some continuing to gallop straight at the brook below, others gathering into groups, trotting their horses to the path which led to the ford.

A smart, tall-shakoed officer in the green jacket of the Chasseurs-à-cheval, with his pelisse thrown loosely around his shoulders, passing Germaine on his small, but well-proportioned stallion, cried out:

"Come on, Germaine!"

Germaine laid her whip on her horse's neck and in long, lumbering jumps it shot forward towards the brook. A hussar in a red dolman overtook and outdistanced her.

Evgueny's nag, however, was a more reasonable animal. Ignoring any efforts on the part of his master to go faster, it calmly let the hunt go past and only then set up a long and swinging trot which brought them safely to the ford. Evgueny could see the red hussar going at a rattling gallop down to the stream, all the time spurring his horse until, suddenly, on legs rigid like door-posts, it came to a dead stop on the very brink of the water. Off flew the red hussar, sailing through the air to find himself the next moment sitting on the grass of the opposite bank. Confused and uncomfortable in his mud-bespattered dolman, he jumped up at once, while his horse, rid of its rider, threw up its head and, lifting its legs gracefully, trotted over

the meadow along the bank of the brook. It was caught and brought back to the hussar.

Evgueny looked round, searching for Germaine. Afar he caught sight of her crimson habit beside the green of her brother's uniform. She had turned away from the ford and was galloping straight at the stream, guiding her horse with a firm hand. Both she and her brother easily jumped the brook. Joy, tinged with fear, was in Evgueny's heart as he saw the big roan on whose back the girl in crimson looked so small, take off and, with a simultaneous flash of all its four irons, fly through the air. At that moment Germaine, bent forward in her saddle, appeared to him as the very picture of courage and beauty.

"Diana incarnate," he thought.

Further on, to the left, the hounds were swimming across the stream. Reaching the opposite bank, they shook the water off their coats, an iridescent water-dust rainbow playing over their backs. The Marquis de Choisy and old de Girardin cleared the stream at a bound and galloped after the pack.

Evgueny found himself one in a jam of hunters and horsewomen. Near him Yvonne, with a golden cascade of hair that had escaped from under her three-cornered hat, spreading like an opulent fan on her back, was laughing to him in greeting; it was reckless joy of life and enjoyment of the chase that rang out in her laugh.

Having cleared the stream the hunt went laboring up the hillside. The hounds were gaining. The red-coated whippers-in on their strong gray horses, were keeping the breathless stag away from the forest. The stag made a dash up the slope but, frightened at a crowd of peasants who had gathered near the village, flung aside and, still on the run, jumped into a small pond with shrubs and thin acacias on its banks.

The pack surrounded and held the stag at bay on the opposite bank.

The Marquis sounded the death-halloo on his horn with all his might.

First to rush up to the stag was an old and lanky Captain of the Chasseurs-à-cheval. Before his horse could stop he

had swung out of the saddle, made his way through the pack and got hold of the quarry's leg.

"Halali!" he shouted wildly in a hoarse voice.

The hunters came hurrying from all sides. Carriages were driving straight across the meadow. The crowd parted, making way for the Empress's barouche. She was with the beautiful Madame de Montmorency.

The old Captain raised his knife. Evgueny turned his head away and swept the crowd with his eye. All the ladies were looking on with glowing eyes, eager to see the kill. Those who were driving in carriages had even risen from their seat, in order to have a better view of the blood. The Empress had also risen. Her proud, delicate face was pale. Sheltering it from the sun with her white sunshade, she held the latter so as not to see the death of the stag.

A black stream of blood was flowing down its neck, over the knife and the dark, sunburnt hand of the old officer.

"Vive l'Impératrice!"

The officers and the hunters shouted and waved their caps.

A whipper-in ripped the white steaming belly of the stag open with his knife, and, turning out the entrails, threw them to the hounds. The legs of the stag, with their black, shining hoofs, were still twitching.

"Vive le Prince de Neufchâtel!"

The ladies did not take their eyes off the dying stag. Germaine's were glittering like two stars in the night. With her delicate nostrils distended and her crimson lips parted and showing her flashing white teeth, she was like some beautiful beast of prey.

A white film had already come over the stag's eyes. Its body was lifeless, its red, white-speckled back was splashed with mud. The hounds were growling and tearing the entrails to pieces. Their white muzzles and paws were smeared with red. A strong smell of warm blood, of game, hounds, and horses' sweat choked the air.

The Empress let herself sink down on her seat beside Madame de Montmorency. The postillion touched up the horses with his whip and the barouche drove at a foot-pace over the

grass towards the road. Evgueny watched the carriage softly sway on its springs as, crossing the side path, it regained the roadway.

Beyond the road, the transparent woods were a blaze of gold and emerald in the bright sunshine. Above their tops rolling clouds of fog were rapidly rising from the warm earth to the sky and spreading out into long streamers of mist, shutting off the horizon. Ominous shadows came creeping on, shrouding the distance in darkness. But above the heads of the hunters and over all the vastness of the open fields the sky was still blue.

VI.

EARLY in the afternoon of the following day, Evgueny bought, at a shop called *"Au fidèle Berger,"* [20] a green cardboard box of sweets. On it a shepherd knelt tenderly before a shepherdess amid a group of sheep and sheep-dogs painted on the lid. Both shepherd and shepherdess were dressed in costumes of the court of Louis XIV, like those the young people had once worn at the masquerades at his mother's house in St. Petersburg. Evgueny then crossed the Seine and directed his way to the Rue du Bac.

Heavy rain was coming down in gray sheets. Evgueny sheltered himself from it with a large umbrella, which Prince Kourakin, whose bones had been aching, had most obligingly lent him on the previous day, in anticipation of bad weather.

Everything was soaking. In front of the greengrocers' shops he passed, under canvas awnings which were sodden and dark, potatoes, or fat carrots lay piled in heaps, with cabbages sprawling next to them, and ropes of onions suspended. The streets were full of people. Black umbrellas collided, dipped and rose, met and separated.

"Pardon. . . ."

"Pardon, monsieur. . . ."

"Pardon, mon vieux. . . ."

[20] " . . . At the Sign of the Faithful Shepherd."

And on they went again under the drumming rain, dispersing into the narrow little streets. The gaps between the shining cobble-stones were running with gray water. Hackney-cabs clattered along in all directions. Evgueny could not find a single one that was empty.

Guided by the plan Germaine had drawn on the sand, Evgueny had no difficulty in finding the street. He began counting the houses: twenty—twenty-one. . . . There it was, the solitary chestnut with its faded yellow leaves. Gray walls, gray shutters. A courtyard paved with slate. Water pouring from the roofs and splashing down to the pavement. A small door. A narrow wooden staircase winding into the darkness. Gropingly Evgueny went up, and on the landing found the door to the left at last. He knocked.

The white cap and apron of a maid showed dim in the darkness of the vestibule. She admitted him to a little room. A hum of voices could be heard and one could see better in the vestibule. Evgueny put down his umbrella and, not without difficulty, found a place to hang his cloak. Then, picking up his hat and his box of sweets, he followed the maid.

The rooms were tiny. Evgueny had never seen such small rooms in Russia. The first of them seemed to be a kind of study. A desk was placed sideways to the window. A sofa stood near the wall. A woman's hat, a shawl and an umbrella lay upon it. The next room had two windows and was somewhat larger. A pot-bellied Boulle[21] cabinet occupied the space between the two windows, and the clock that stood upon it was just gaily tinkling two. A sofa, like a Roman couch, stood against the wall. A silk bolster lay at its head, and beside it was an incense-burner on a tripod. The room was divided by a wide arch. At the farther end stood a round table with five people sitting about it.

"Of course it is he. . . . It's our Russian friend . . ." he heard Germaine's voice saying. "See how punctual he is! A diplomat, no—a soldier could not be more punctual."

[21] Name of the celebrated French cabinet-maker who made objects of furniture inlaid with brass and tortoiseshell in the time of Louis XIV. The name (also written Bhul) applied to work of that kind.

Germaine went forward to greet him. Her guests had also risen, except a golden-haired girl who remained sitting near the wall, half hidden by a five-branched candelabrum. He recognized Yvonne de Choisy. Germaine's brother André was the first to come up to him.

"We have met before," he said.

Indoors he looked rougher and manlier than he had appeared to Evgueny on horseback, in the field. He wore his curly black hair hanging down in locks over his forehead and along his ears. His freshly-shaven, ruddy face was tanned from exposure.

"Monsieur Ponton," said André, with a gesture towards an elderly gentleman in a simple, dark-blue coat, open in front, and with a very high collar. A pale, intelligent face looked at Evgueny from out of that collar.

"Monsieur Darbelle." The gentleman thus introduced was a small, dry old man dressed in a green swallow-tail and black silk breeches. "Our beautiful Yvonne you already know."

"Sit down, *Monsieur le Secrétaire,*" said Germaine with a mischievous smile. "Will you have some chocolate? It is quite hot. It will warm you. Thank you for the sweets. . . . *'Au Fidèle Berger'*. . . . How nice of you. . . . *'Au Fidèle Berger'?* . . ." she repeated, laying a stress on the word *fidèle.*— "We shall see."

The guests resumed their seats. Germaine made Evgueny sit next to her, opposite Yvonne. André sat down beside him and, next to Yvonne, Ponton.

"As I was saying," said Darbelle in an insinuating voice, apparently continuing a conversation begun before Evgueny's arrival— *"Salus patriae suprema lex."* [22]

He stopped for a moment, probably considering what had been said before either not interesting to the newcomer, or better unrepeated in the presence of a stranger, and then turned to speak to Evgueny.

"I am very glad to see that the secretary of the Russian Ambassador has found his way to Mademoiselle Réville's salon, which we all love so much. You may find it possible to

[22] The welfare (or salvation) of one's country is the supreme law.

explain many things which are incomprehensible to us in your vast empire, where the sun never sets! How superb!"

Germaine looked kindly at Evgueny. To-day she was in light rose color, the low cut showing part of her bosom. The dress was bound by a black ribbon well above the waist, thus plainly delineating the swelling contour of her young breasts. With one hand she took a sweet from the box; with the other, she squeezed Evgueny's hand under the table.

"For instance . . ." Darbelle went on. "I beg you to excuse me, but I am member of the Geographical Society and very much interested in knowing the attitude of the inhabitants of Lithuania towards Russia?"

The old man fixed his eyes, unblinking, and alive with intelligence, upon the clear eyes of Evgueny.

"What do you mean? I don't quite understand. The Lithuanians? But they are as loyal and obedient to the Emperor as any other of the Russian people."

"But they are not Russians. They have a language of their own."

"They are not strictly Russian, that is true. But it is so long since they have been an integral part of the Empire that they regard Russia as their common mother."

"I see. . . ." The old man mumbled, moving his dry wrinkled lips as though he was munching something. "And then, with you, I mean on that vast plain between the Niemen and the Volga, is the winter really as severe as people like to tell us?"

"Oh, yes. Night frosts begin early in October, and soon after the winter sets in in earnest, the earth freezes and becomes like stone. Heavy snow begins to fall and covers everything until spring. Sometimes it is so deep that houses have to be dug out."

"When that happens," said André, "and a war is on, all fighting must cease, I suppose?"

"Well, it depends. . . . We fought in Sweden. . . . You may have heard of the Russian troops crossing the sea over the ice?"

"Ah, those Russian troops!" sighed Yvonne.

"Here I have been wasting time. . ." said Monsieur Ponton, "trying to make people understand that Russia is a poor country, a very poor country indeed. They simply won't believe me. They always rave of it as a kind of Indies that lies beyond the Russian steppes: furs, gold, corn, brocades, precious stones. . . ."

"All those exist in Russia," said Evgueny, "but the distance over which they are scattered is enormous."

"Tell me, please," Darbelle once more turned to Evgueny. "Have you maps in Russia? Geographical and topographical maps? As a member of the Geographical Society, I am very much interested."

"Why, yes. . . . We have excellent maps."

"Whose business is it to draw and print them?"

"The War and Naval Department, and also the Department of Ways and Communications."

"What kind of maps are they? You know what I mean? There are two ways of printing: from stone, which is called lithography, and from copper plates—that's engraving."

"Our maps of Russia, from the Niemen to Kamtchatka," said Evgueny, not without pride, "are printed from copper plates."

"And where are these plates kept?"

"In a depot in St. Petersburg."

Germaine's little hand gently stroked Evgueny's, lightly touching his knee. They had had their chocolate, and the visitors were getting up from table.

"Well, good-bye, little sister," said André. "You were splendid yesterday when you took that jump at the hunt. It is a pity the Emperor did not see you."

Ponton and Darbelle were also preparing to leave. The old man was long winding his scarf round his neck, saying in a grumbling voice:

"Yes . . . all that is very interesting. . . . It's important. . . . It is all so necessary to know at present."

Yvonne remained with Evgueny while Germaine went to see her guests off.

"Germaine's party was not very interesting to-day," said

Yvonne. "Sometimes one hears of events here before they are published in *'Le Moniteur.'*"

When Germaine returned, Yvonne also prepared to take leave.

"Why so soon?"

"You know quite well. . . . I have all sorts of things to do."

Evgueny here made a gesture as though reaching out for his hat.

"No, no, my dear friend," peremptorily said Germaine. "I shan't let you go in this weather. Stay with me, even if you risk finding it a bit dull. As soon as it clears I shall order a carriage and take you to see Paris."

"I must be at the Ambassador's at six. I must receive the papers from him to-day."

Germaine frowned. "There is time until six. You have not yet seen the Triumphal Arch at the end of the Champs Elysées? A new Paris is building there. It is going to be really beautiful."

When Yvonne had gone, Germaine sat down on the sofa and leaning back, stretched out her feet. They were bare and shod in sandals. Her dress, with all its many folds, was so thin and clung so close to her body, that it seemed as though there were no dress at all.

"Sit down here, closer to me."

Germaine moved her little feet away from the edge of the sofa, making room for the blushing and confused Evgueny.

"That's right. Are you comfortable?"

Her shining eyes looked from under her long, thick eyelashes into Evgueny's face. Germaine lit the incense burner. The delicate oriental perfume made his head swim.

Germaine put her palms on Evgueny's shoulders, and, keeping him at the distance of her outstretched bare arms, looked him straight in the eyes. Under her steadfast gaze, his was growing dim like the eyes of the stag at the hunt the day before.

"Tell me . . . may a young girl sit so close to a young man in Russia?"

"No. . . . That could never happen with us. In my coun-

try, a girl may never stay alone with a man. There must always be some one present. Her mother . . . or an aunt . . . a duenna of some kind . . . an old nurse. . . ."

"And if she is a slave?"

"A slave? You mean a serf?" Evgueny was all a-shiver with pent up emotion He did not know what to say and almost inaudibly whispered:

"I don't know."

"Well, and if she is his fiancée?"

"His fiancée? . . . No, even then that would be impossible. There may be a kiss here and there snatched by stealth . . . in the dark of a passage . . . or in the garden. . . ."

Germaine's arms bent softly at the elbows, drawing Evgueny to her. Her neck was quite close to his lips.

"A kiss . . . by stealth . . ." she repeated as though lost in thought. Then she gave a soft laugh.

Evgueny's face was burning. His eyes fell. They saw a sweet, secret groove between two lovely swelling breasts. His glance was held captive by the charm of that girlish body, where the warm flesh melted into rosy shadow.

He did not see Germaine's face, nor did he see her glittering black eyes, but he saw her body and that body made him its slave. Now, shifting her position, she turned towards him the nape of her neck, so that the back of her low-necked dress was quite close to his face. Half turned towards him, she said:

"The Emperor Alexander is our Emperor's friend. But tell me, why is the Emperor Alexander—emperor?"

Evgueny did not answer, quite unable to grasp the meaning of her question, which was so distant from his own thoughts.

Germaine repeated her question.

"But—he was born Emperor, mademoiselle," answered Evgueny mechanically.

His head was going round. Outside the rain was falling steadily, but the room was an enchanted grotto. A heady fragrance rose from the censer. Lithely twisting and turning, the half-naked woman kept moving her body and touching Evgueny, now with her shoulder and now with her back. She put her hands on his shoulders, now drawing him to herself, and then

pushing him away again, talking rapidly and insistently, almost touching his lips with her own.

"You heard what our Emperor said to your Ambassador yesterday? 'My campaigns, my victories have made me what I am.' He is Emperor. You had a glimpse of his glory. Yesterday you were at the Prince de Neufchâtel's, who owns the Chateau of Gros-Bois. Who was this General Berthier formerly? Just such an insignificant, humdrum officer as yourself. The favor of his sovereign made him a prince and gave him riches. Napoleon remembers services. He is generous. And Prince Murat? He is a king now. Married to the Emperor's sister. . . . Think of it! A street boy selling patties, then a dashing cavalry officer, and now—a king. Have you anything like that in Russia?"

Evgueny vaguely remembered what he had been told of Souvoroff. How, ill and dying, he had arrived in St. Petersburg and had had no home to go to. "But he did not ask for anything himself. . . . Souvoroff would never have asked for a reward," Evgueny thought.

"A great poet has said that to recognize services is to reward them," Germaine continued, in the same passionate voice so strangely at variance with the meaning of her words. "Russia and France must be allies. They must act together. And you must join us to help in this. I will take you under my guidance. Who but Josephine guided and directed Napoleon when he was First Consul? It was for her that he organized that marvelously beautiful coronation. He had a set of lay figures made, and he and Josephine worked out all the details of the ceremonial with the help of those figures. It is to her he owes his elevation. You will owe yours to me—or perhaps you do not want to be with me?"

A smile of raillery was in her eyes. A bare arm laid itself round Evgueny's neck and drew his face quite close to Germaine's.

"Or perhaps you do not want to?" she repeated.

"Germaine!"

Evgueny fell on his knees before the couch, his arms round

her pliant waist. The room swam before him. He saw her gleaming eyes.

"I love you," he said in French.

She smiled. It was the first time he had seen that smile, sad, enigmatic and tender.

"You must love France."

"I do love France" . . . Evgueny exclaimed with enthusiasm.

"You must love France and love me. Stay in Paris. I will arrange everything. And you must do all I tell you."

"Yes . . . yes . . . I will do everything . . . I will do all you tell me."

He covered her fingers, her palms, her bare arms with kisses.

"It is fate," kept beating in his brain. "Fate is carrying me away. To sunny heights or to hell—I do not care. I shall not try to struggle against it."

Germaine kissed his flaming cheek quietly, like a sister. But he had abandoned himself wholly to her caresses. Passion was blinding him. He became bolder and bolder, clasping his arms round Germaine, who had nestled against him.

The bronze clock struck five. Germaine slipped from his embrace with snake-like agility.

"It is time for you to go," she said, pointing to the clock.

"Where to?" Evgueny looked at her with uncomprehending eyes.

"To your Ambassador."

"Why?"

"You must go to him. Do your duty there for the last time and then come back to me at once. I shall wait for you."

"I shall not go."

"You must. You must for Russia's sake and for the sake of France, whom you profess to love. And for my own sake too—you must! I order you to go."

Again she kissed him.

"Go . . . and come back to me at once."

"I shall come back to you at once," Evgueny repeated, hardly understanding what he was saying.

Evgueny left the flat, reeling on the stairs as though drunk.

He went down holding on to the banisters. He did not think of anything. *"J'aime mieux ma mie,"* [23] sounded vaguely in his mind, mingling with the tender words of the old song he had heard his sister Nadenka sing:

"Every land is Paradise with thee. . . ."

The land that met his eyes was beautiful indeed. The rain had ceased. The sky was a deep and limpid blue in the distance, over the Seine, and golden flashes of light were scintillating there. Orange branches of trees shone over the dark water. Beyond rose the tall buildings and white statues of the Louvre.

The hum of the crowd, the rumble of wheels, snatches carried from afar of the music of a regiment on the march—all this was Paris, and Evgueny was charmed by it. The city seemed a thousand times more beautiful than at his first sight of it.

VII.

PRINCE KOURAKIN'S attendant begged Evgueny to wait.

"Consul Labensky has also been waiting for over an hour. I see that his Excellency's umbrella has come in handy with all that rain to-day," he said, taking his cloak and the umbrella from Evgueny and ushering him into the reception-room. A gentleman in traveling costume was sitting there. He got up and bowed to Evgueny, who acknowledged his bow.

About ten minutes passed by. They seemed endless to Evgueny.

A bell rang behind the tall, bronze-ornamented door. The attendant went into the Ambassador's study, walking noiselessly on the parquet, and the Ambassador's voice reached Evgueny through the imperfectly closed door.

"Is Lieutenant Ogloblin here?"

"Yes, your Excellency. Consul Labensky has also been waiting for some time."

"Call the Lieutenant in first."

[23] "I prefer my love."

Evgueny entered the study. Prince Kourakin, standing at his writing-desk, was melting some sealing-wax at the flame of a wax candle, holding his seal in readiness.

"I am glad you are punctual," said Kourakin, sealing the envelope and handing it to Evgueny. "You will start for Brest without a moment's delay. You will give this packet to Captain Kolomyitzeff. Your seat in the diligence is booked. The coach leaves from the Porte Maillot at eight to-day. You have time to catch it, and in another forty-eight hours you will be in Brest. You will travel with a French passport. You are —the merchant Sigouret. Do you understand?"

Evgueny looked at Kourakin's face. It was tired and gray. The Ambassador had a wide dressing-gown pulled over his shirt-sleeves, and he was still in the same trousers he had worn at the hunt. His feet were in slippers. The candles on the writing-desk had burnt down to the socket. A half-empty glass of tea and a plate with some biscuits stood on the table. One could see the Prince had been working all night.

"This matter must be kept secret. The papers are of the highest importance. That is why you will not travel under your own name." He looked wearily at Evgueny and rang the bell. "Well, good-bye and God bless you." The attendant appeared at the door. "Ask Consul Labensky to come in."

Evgueny left the room. His legs were trembling. Putting the passport into his side pocket, he slid the envelope inside his shirt.

"To-day at eight. . . . The Porte Maillot is far from here, I think. . . . I have no time to lose. I must drive there at once."

Meanwhile his feet, as though of their own accord, carried him down the street, to the Seine, to the bridge near the Rue du Bac.

"She is waiting for me. . . . She said I must obey her. I shall go in for a moment, just to say good-bye, and then hurry on. . . . I can still manage to catch the coach." But in his heart he knew that, once in Germaine's flat, he would never be able to leave it. "Russia's welfare is in this envelope. My duty lies sealed in it. But what is Russia? Russia for me,

France for Germaine . . . and I cannot live without Germaine. Like Ulysses, I shall forsake my country. I shall be disloyal to it. . . . But what is disloyalty? Is a man disloyal if he follows whom he loves best?"

He began to cross the bridge. An old Frenchman was coming towards him. He was well dressed and looked pleased with life.

"That man there, I am sure, must once have cried 'Vive le Roi!'—then bowed low before the Consulate and the Directory. Now it is 'Vive l'Empereur!' What has he been faithful to? Yet he lives and looks happy. What ties me to Russia? My mother, my sister Nadenka. . . . All those young girls who danced with me. . . . The Naval Corps. . . . Stolnikoff. . . . Kolomyitzeff. . . . The corvette *Diana*? . . . But what if Germaine is dearer to me than any of them? I shall remain with her. I shall merge in this crowd and cry 'Vive l'Empereur!' to Napoleon. He is our Emperor's friend. But what does it mean —'our Emperor'? When I say it, it means Alexander, but when Germaine says it, it means Napoleon. And I love Germaine."

He walked slowly. His legs felt like lead. Having crossed the bridge, Evgueny stopped. With sudden clearness, the conversation he had overheard the day before rose up in his memory. He had not thought of it yesterday. It seemed to have gone quite out of his mind.

"Why, but that means war between France and Russia! Four hundred thousand men are ready to march against Russia. This paper I am carrying on my breast certainly has got it all in black and white. It is probably a warning to Admiral Seniavin to be on the look out."

Evgueny looked dully at the rippling Seine. He was standing opposite the Rue du Bac.

"War between France and Russia. . . . But that means war between Germaine and me? It means parting. . . . Hatred. It is the end of our love, which has begun as in a fairy-tale. The end . . . for ever. But my fate is with Germaine. I must go to her. We must be united before it is too late. I must take her to Russia before the war breaks out. But if she refuses to

go? Then I must stay here. I must become like one of those who serve Napoleon. Like the Prince de Neufchâtel, like King Murat. If I forsake Russia, who is the loser and what is the loss? What is an ordinary lieutenant like Ogloblin to Russia, which is so great and so vast? But if I die of love for Germaine, there will be no Russia for me. There will be nothing. I must live for myself."

He continued walking slowly along the Rue du Bac. He was already opposite the house with the solitary chestnut tree in the courtyard.

"Germaine is there. . . . She is waiting for me." Evgueny turned into the gateway.

Suddenly he stopped. Then, slowly, slowly, as though impelled by some will other than his own, he turned and walked back to the Seine . . . almost running in the end. At the bridge he hailed a fiacre and was driven quickly to the Porte Maillot.

VIII.

A FRESH easterly land breeze was churning up purple waves into silvery foam. There was not a single cloud in the sky. The sun was dipping towards the ocean. The little boat kept making steady headway in response to the short strokes of the sturdy Frenchman who, bare throated and hairy chested, sat rowing in the bow. The hull of the *Diana* rose swiftly above the water, and the trim corvette seemed to advance, bearing down upon Evgueny. The waves washed lapping against her sides; the tight-stretched cables of her anchors creaked in the hawse-pipes.

"Who rows there?" came the challenge from the ship.

"Lieutenant Ogloblin," answered Evgueny, feeling his heart contract with emotion.

"Aye, aye, Lieutenant Ogloblin is rowing in the boat," and the wooden gangway-ladder came rattling down the ship's side.

Climbing on deck Evgueny was met by the officer of the watch, Lieutenant Stolnikoff who, beaming with pleasure to see his friend once more, informed him that Captain Kolomyitzeff

had left orders that he should report at once, without taking time to change his clothes. Evgueny made his way to the poop. The captain's orderly, the seaman Danilo Zoubarioff, announced him, and in another moment Evgueny found himself first embraced by, and then standing in front of, a small stout man who stood firmly planted on short, strong legs.

"Thank God," the captain said, hurriedly opening the envelope given him, with a broad Japanese ivory knife. "I was beginning to feel uneasy about you. I was, bless you![24] You so young, and saddled with such a responsible job! It is not only the fate of the ship, it is the fate of Russia herself that traveled with you. And all owing to accursed France! There is not a man there but belongs to a different political party. The Jacobins, and the Vendée Royalists and worst of all, the Bonapartists themselves, might have taken it into their heads to hunt you down. Now, look here. The sun is setting. In a minute they are going to pipe all hands to the lowering of the flag. Whatever else we have got to talk over we'll leave until to-morrow. To-morrow morning we'll take it easy and you shall tell me how you have fared. But, bless you I say, how sunburnt and dusty you are! You must be tired. Go and have a wash now . . . and a good rest."

Old "Bless You" shook Evgueny by the hand in sign of dismissal.

Stolnikoff's orderly, Gordienko, helped Evgueny to undress. Evgueny wanted to put his uniform and his epaulets on at once, to go on deck for the lowering of the flag, and then to see the captain once more. But he thought better of it. He knew that old Bless You would not receive him, and decided it was best to follow his advice and have a good rest. He could hardly stand by now, from fatigue and mental excitement.

Meanwhile the boatswain's pipes were twittering overhead. Voices were calling out along the decks:

"All hands on deck for the lowering of the flag!" Presently there was a pattering of bare feet as the crew came swarming up the companion-ladders to the upper deck. It died away, and then came the bang of the sunset gun. The bugles

[24] Captain Kolomyitzeff's favorite ejaculation.

sounded for evening prayers, and the words of *Our Father,* chanted by one hundred and fifty voices, rose to heaven.

"You ought to undress and lie down, your Honor," said the orderly. "I shall bring you some tea and something to eat directly from the wardroom."

The lure of the pillow and the softness of the deep ship's bunk were too strong for Evgueny to resist. He lay down, and his burning cheek had no sooner met the freshness of the pillow than, in the stillness that had suddenly ensued, his senses yielded to the lulling sound of the waves' limpid lapping against the ship's sides, and the faint creaking of her timbers. His eyes closed and immediately, without interruption, the measured rumbling of wheels on a country-road sounded in his ears. Now they came to a paved portion of the road and went rattling over the cobbles. The postillion blew his horn, the carriage shook, and a voice from nowhere said unexpectedly in Russian: "Your tea is ready, sir." And then everything merged into a sweet darkness.

Orderly Gordienko stood for some moments bent over the sleeping officer, in doubt what to do. He was loath to wake him and finally took away the supper-tray, leaving Evgueny alone in the cabin.

Evgueney awoke with a start, as though he had received a shock. He thought he had not slept long, but it was daylight and, reflecting the sun, the golden ripples of the waves played, wove chiaroscuro patterns of moving lace on the low ceiling of the cabin. Rhythmically, his feet went up and his head down. Then, reaching their apex, as it were, his feet stood still for a moment and then went down again in response to the upward movement of his head. The curtain swayed, and, with brass rings clinking, swept back clinging to the door. The ship was rolling. The sleepy lap-lap of waves against a ship at anchor had gone. The waves hissed and hit the sides of the ship, dashing themselves to spray with a thundering noise. The ship shook and labored.

Evgueny leapt from his berth and ran to the port-hole.

A fresh breeze, such as is only felt in the open sea, fanned his face. As far as the eye could reach, nothing but dark-blue waves, where white crests kept flashing up and vanishing on the vastness. The water shone all over, covered with glittering splashes of light from the sun which had already risen high in the sky. Looking down, Evgueny saw the pinkish reflection of white sails in the deep.

The corvette *Diana* was now fast scudding away from France . . . away from Paris . . . away from Germaine.

Evgueny buttoned his uniform with trembling hands, put on his hat, and went on deck.

Shadows lay on the deck, and the sun filtered through the sails, embroidering golden designs. The standing-jibs, the flying-jibs and the studding-sails were hoisted and filled with wind. Like a white bird, the ship went proudly flying over the sea. The water hissed and boiled, plowed up by the hull, and the wide band of the wake extended, silvery white, over the waves behind the stern. Eddies whirled on its surface, scattering the foam about like ropes of pearls. Gulls flew low over the water, uttering cries of alarm. They skimmed it with their wings and then soared high above the tops of the masts.

On the forecastle, filling the whole of the upper deck between capstan and bulwarks, the men who had finished their morning work of cleaning ship lay resting, bare-footed and still in fatigue dress. All was scrupulously clean. The decks had been scrubbed and sluiced, and all brass-work, together with gun barrels and rings had been burnished until they shone. The low green gun-cradles looked as though they had been freshly painted. The main-stays, fore-stays and mizzen-shrouds were drawn taut by lanyards, and though the ship was rolling no slack showed anywhere in the tackle. Jib-stays, jib-boom, back-stays, top-gallant stays, the whole of the cordage, in a word, was drawn taut as the strings of a violin.

On the poop stood Captain Kolomyitzeff himself. Dressed in black, with a three-cornered laced hat on his head, he stood shading his eyes with his palm and looking his ship all over, a smile of content on his lips.

Brand new, built but three months before in the Admiralty

yards at St. Petersburg, the *Diana* proudly rode the waves like a thing of life.

On a coil of tarred mooring-rope lay stout "Poushok,"[25] the ship's gray tom-cat of purest Cronstadt breed.[26] With his white paws tucked under his body and his green eyes screwed up in lazy condescension, he looked importance personified. His black-tipped tail hung down and moved slightly, as though he, Poushok, also wanted to show he was pleased with the ship and fully approved of her.

Evgueny reached the poop. The Russian flag fluttered at the stern. The white dinghy rocked swinging from the stern-davits, and fire-buckets stood in a row. Ahead and astern, as far as the eye could reach, there was nothing but the sea. Only a vague line of pink cliffs, faintly visible against the horizon, showed where the mainland was.

Evgueny asked Stolnikoff, who had just come up to him, where they were bound for, and was given the reply that none of the officers had been told.

The *Diana* sailed on, holding her course and driven by a fresh land-breeze, and no one, except her captain, knew whither she was bound and why.

Pleading a headache, Evgueny got rid of Stolnikoff, who annoyed him by his inquisitiveness. Consumed with despair, he went below and entered his cabin.

Both his and Stolnikoff's beds had been freshly made during his absence. Closing the door, he threw himself upon the yellow woolen blanket and buried his face in the pillow. Irrepressible tears streamed from his eyes.

"J'aime mieux ma mie . . ." mockingly sounded the words of the Paris street-song in his ears.

[25] "Fluff."

[26] A joke of course. There is no such thing as a Cronstadt breed of cats.

IX.

THOSE days of Petersburg spring, days of his own spring-time, were to Kouzma full of the joys of life. From early morning until late at night, one joy followed another. The enjoyment of warlike exercise, the joyous feeling of belonging to that brotherhood of dashing fellows of which Sergeant-Major Paramonoff was an inspiring example, the joy of being alive and able to bring into play that strength which, in response to the rousing Cossack songs, he felt coursing in every fiber of his being, filled his mornings until it was time to foregather for their copious midday meal at the quarters of their squadron leader, Captain Elmourzin. There, huge, steaming platefuls of roseate *shtchi*[27] would appear on the table, *kasha*[28] would stand dished up in a crumbling heap, and crisp Don biscuits would be crunched by strong teeth. A glass of vodka before the soup would be followed by another after, before the beef had been served.

After dinner the young ensigns and the officers would hurry to the new Admiralty Boulevard, to the Quay, to the Summer Gardens, or to the Field of Mars. All Petersburg would be there. Maria Alexeévna and Nadenka were sure to be there too; one had only to look out for them and find them in the dense crowd of smart people.

Kouzma and Prince Tiumen, and also stout, good-humored Lieutenant Peter Petrovitch Konkoff, their mentor, who was just another gay young fellow as themselves, saddled their horses one afternoon and rode off to the Nevsky.

The middle walk of the boulevard, freshly strewn with red sand, was thronged with people moving up and down between the rows of poplars, which were laden with sticky buds. Not interested in the least, Kouzma wended his way in the press of closed and open carriages and izvostchik guitars which drove along the Nevsky. He knew that Nadenka would not be there.

[27] Cabbage-meat soup. A Russian national dish.
[28] A kind of millet-pudding.

He was in a hurry to reach the Quay.

Out on their daily afternoon walk, Maria Alexéevna and Nadenka, accompanied by Fofo, had reached the high, arched granite bridge that spanned the Swan Canal near the Summer Gardens.

The view which opened from the top of the bridge on the Neva and the Quay was full of beauty. The severe line of palaces, with glittering tiers of windows, stretched all along the Quay until it disappeared in the distance, while in front of this row of stately buildings, the river, agleam all over its vast expanse with the gold of sunbeams, rolled its waters toward the far off Isaac bridge.

They had scarcely reached the top of the bridge, when they saw the red uniforms of the Cossack Life-Guards flaming above the medley of carriages and horses and pedestrians. Nadenka's sharp eyes did not fail to single out Kouzma at once.

He was riding a light-weight black stallion. Beside him rode Prince Tiumen, dressed in an oriental robe and with a Kalmuck *malakhai*[29] on his head. Lieutenant Konkoff brought up the rear. They rode at a foot pace and Nadenka noticed from afar that Kouzma was attentively scanning the crowd. Their eyes met and Kouzma, jerking up his horse's head, struck him with his whip. The horse shot forward, then, sinking back on his hind-quarters, reared and pranced.

"Kouzka, stop that!" cried Konkoff. "You are crazy! What are you jumping about for? Showing off like an infantry drum-major!"

Meanwhile Kouzma had gone off in headlong gambades towards the Ogloblins, when he suddenly caught sight of Fofo. At that very moment, Nadenka turned to Fofo with a smile.

Driving his whip across the horse's forehead, Kouzma gave a whoop and galloped at full speed up the bridge through the crowd which parted before him, and then down the slippery stones. Sparks flew from the horse's iron shoes.

"He is mad!" Nadenka exclaimed in a frightened voice. "He is sure to hurt people."

[29] Fur cap with ear-lappets worn by the Kalmucks.

A whippet tore barking after Kouzma, under his horse's very heels.

Kouzma was blind to everything. He had a sudden sharp impulse to turn his horse's head to the left, jump over the stone barrier and swim the river, and he would certainly have obeyed it, but luckily a young girl who, all pink and fair and delicate like a hot-house flower, was standing near the parapet, called out to him waving her sunshade: "Kouzia! Don't crush me!" Her blue eyes were burning with enthusiasm.

It was Emmotchka Spalte, out for a walk with her brother, an officer of the Izmailoff Regiment. Kouzma stopped.

"What are you carrying on like that for?" said Emmotchka, putting her hand on the foam-flecked neck of the horse. "He won't bite me?"

Outwardly Kouzma had recovered his self-control. But his mind was in a turmoil. "Ah," he thought—"I see! Going for walks with Fofo, with that white rat, that guinea-pig. . . . Very well, then!"

"How are you, Emma Ivanovna? Karlousha,[80] dear old chap, pleased to see you," he exclaimed with ostentatious friendliness.

Meanwhile Konkoff and Tiumen had caught up Kouzma.

"Ensign Minaieff, I'll be forced to put you under arrest," said Konkoff with displeasure.

"He deserves it, too, Peter Petrovitch," said Emmotchka.

Brother and sister turned away to go up the granite steps of the bridge, while Konkoff with the ensigns continued his way along the Summer Gardens.

"In love, I see, playing the fool!" giggled Prince Tiumen. "My word, how funny you are! Just like a schoolboy. Never seen any girls?"

"You better shut up, Tiulen," [81] snapped Kouzma.

"I don't want to shut up. I see you are funny and I say you are."

"Will you stop your gabble, you Kalmuck monkey?"

"Bah, bah, why so cross?"

[80] Diminutive for *Karl.*

[81] Seal. Also used in the sense of awkward, clumsy fellow.

"Take care, or I'll smack your face before all these people."

"And I'll call you out and fight you in a duel. You heard what he said, sir?" said Tiumen turning to Konkoff. "He has insulted me."

Tiumen's face had swelled up with rage, turning scarlet. The narrow slits of his eyes darted fiery sparks. He was seriously offended and had just started a voluminous speech appealing to Konkoff, when suddenly a strange voice rang out from the entrance of the Summer Gardens in peremptory tones:

"Ensign of the Cossack Life-Guards, please to come here!"

The sharp hail came from a general who stood at the gate of the Summer Gardens. He was dressed in a dark-blue uniform with a tall silver-embroidered collar and silver epaulets, and the St. George's Cross at his neck and on his chest. He wore a shako with a blue-cloth flap and a silver chain. He was a man of spare frame, not tall, with a clean-shaven face and black whiskers descending from his temples to his ears. Thick curly hair showed from under his shako and bushy eyebrows overhung his dark eyes, which looked mockingly and at the same time sternly about. He stood leaning on the diamond-studded hilt of a magnificent sword, sheathed in a silver scabbard. With his white-gloved hand he beckoned Kouzma to approach.

Kouzma drew himself up and, saluting, rode up to the general. By the portraits he had seen of him, by the distinguishing badges on his uniform, and, last but not least, by the number of St. George's Crosses, Kouzma at once recognized Cavalry-General Matvei Ivanovitch Platoff, the Ataman of the Don himself.

X.

THE Ataman of the Don had been in a rather depressed and troubled state of mind for the last hour. He had not yet been able to settle whether that which had happened to him that day would result in good or in evil. What had happened was this:

He had been bidden to lunch by the Dowager Empress Maria Fedorovna in her own apartments at the Winter Palace.

The affection Platoff had for the Empress Maria Fedorovna was a peculiar blend of feelings. He was most tenderly and respectfully in love with her, as with a woman of perfect beauty, grace and elegance. He revered in her his advocate and intercessor, for in the Emperor Paul's time, in the dark days of disgrace and exile to Kalouga, it was she who had saved him from things worse than that. Lastly, he bowed down before her as before an empress and the mother of his Sovereign. The whole of her personality, as that of a refined artist, a talented painter of miniatures, a clever and sensitive woman, made her appear to simple and uneducated Platoff as the most perfect prototype of both womanhood and queenliness, and in her presence he always felt happy, unconstrained, and at ease.

The luncheon-party consisted of a small number of intimates. Platoff told the Empress tales of the last war. With her delicate little hand she kept the Ataman's glass filled with mellow, dark port, pouring it out from a decanter set with purple stars, and the Ataman, bowing his thanks with a click of his spurs, drank the fragrant wine with visible relish.

"Your Majesty," he said, "I have always tried to do my duty and exerted myself to the utmost of my strength. I say this not because I want to praise myself; I say it as Your Majesty's most loyal subject. During the last campaign I have been giving the Frenchies the hell of a time, I have been capturing lieutenants, captains, colonels, generals of theirs by the dozen; there were too many to keep track of their number. I sent them all to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army; he must know how many there were. French insolence has been knocked out of them. They are exhausted. A good half of their cavalry has been wiped out by the Cossacks of the Don, and of their infantry, too, they have lost a vast deal."

"Yet people say, Ataman, that Napoleon intends to make war against us."

"They are talking wildly, Your Majesty. They babble."

After lunch the Empress led the way to a large salon. Platoff, who had decided to take his leave as soon as the opportunity offered itself, followed. At the door they stopped. The Empress asked Platoff with a gesture to precede her, but he

would not be the first to pass, and the Empress entered the hall with the Ataman following. The parquet shone like a mirror under their feet, and, after the port he had had at lunch, Platoff felt none too steady on it.

"Your Majesty," he said, addressing the Empress, "a Cossack is born not for walking on parquet-floors or sitting on velvet. That only serves to make him forget his native calling. A Cossack's business is roaming over fields and bogs and sheltering in grass huts or, better still, staying in the open air, so as to get inured to fatigue, heat and bad weather. Then he will always remain a Cossack of the Don. No work succeeds unless the man whose business it is keeps on doing it. If he steps away from it an inch, it will step away from him a yard."

While talking thus, the Empress and Platoff reached the farther end of the room, where there was a large white door fitted with mirrors. A good-looking man of noble mien, in the attire, then already out of fashion, of powdered wig, dark-blue tail-coat, and knee-breeches, stood apparently waiting for the Empress. On their approach he bowed in respectful obeisance.

"You are not acquainted?" the Empress turned to Platoff. "This is Nikolai Mikhailovitch Karamzin." [82]

"Karamzin?" said Platoff, looking the blue-coated gentleman all over with his piercing eyes. "I somehow do not remember having met the gentleman before."

"It is Karamzin, our celebrated writer, don't you know?" said the Empress with a note of kind reproach in her voice.

"A writer!" exclaimed Platoff with a sudden gush of heartiness, shaking Karamzin's hand with both his own. "Is that so? I love writers, I do! They all are such excellent topers. And now, with Your Majesty's leave, I'll take myself off."

With a smile of tolerant indulgence, the Empress held out her hand to Platoff. He kissed it, and then, walking backwards and holding his left hand on the hilt of his sword, he began bowing himself out of the room, himself surprised at the elegance and lightness with which he was achieving it. In this way, still moving backwards, he came dangerously near the spot where a valuable Chinese vase stood on a frail pedestal.

[82] Celebrated Russian writer and historian.

Before the Empress had time to warn him, he bent low once more in the bow of a courtier and in doing so, caught at the pedestal with the point of his sword. The vase crashed into fragments. Confused, the Ataman jumped aside, only to get one of his spurs caught in a rug, and would undoubtedly have fallen on the slippery parquet had not the Empress herself steadied him with a light movement of the hand. Crimson with confusion, Platoff bent low before the Empress and kissed her hand. Then, turning round to Karamzin and to the courtiers who had come hurrying up at the noise, he exclaimed: "My very disgrace raises me to honor, for now I have the happiness of once more kissing my Sovereign's, our gracious mother's hand."

Stepping away from the fragments of the vase which were already being swept up by the lackeys, he pointed to the wreckage and added:

"There seems to be some truth in the saying that what a Cossack cannot take away he breaks Its first part implies what is not true, of course, but the second part has come about owing to me."

From the Palace Platoff drove in a closed Court carriage to the Summer Gardens, where he dismissed it and took the lime-tree avenue, wending his way to the Quay. The white fragments of the broken vase, with the shimmer of intricate golden designs, still mocked him and danced before his eyes, and the din of smashing china rang in his ears.

"I got out of it though," he thought. "Still, it is a bad enough business as it is, very bad. It is sure to set all tongues wagging in town. Denissoff in Tcherkassk is sure to hear all about it soon enough. How that man is going to laugh at me! However, wasn't it clever, the way I put it: 'Disgrace raises to honor'? No worse than any of these quill-drivers. A nice face that Karamzin fellow has got! I must say, though, he does not look at all like a man who drinks. Still, very likely, he does drink. For how is a man to have ideas if he doesn't?" . . . Then, haunted by the vision of the vase, "It must have been expensive," he thought; "a present, perhaps, from the Emperor of China himself."

Only in the Summer Gardens, where budding lime trees

filled the air with fragrance and gardeners were busy bedding out young plants into the warm, sweet-smelling earth, Platoff began to feel more like himself. Here and there he met people he knew. Some of them he passed with a bow. With others he exchanged a word, and to two of his friends he even related the incident of the vase, cleverly touching up the tale to his advantage. "Let them hear it from me," he thought, "before they get the news by way of lying gossip." Thus he had almost regained his usual good-humor by the time he reached the gates that led to the Neva. Here he suddenly saw the Cossack Life-Guards ensign come galloping like a madman down the bridge. His first impression was that the horse had simply run away with its rider. But with the sharp glance of a horseman he readily observed that the young man had his mount perfectly in hand, whereupon, believing the ensign drunk, he decided to take him to task.

"What do you mean, sir, by trying to show off monkey tricks before people in a place like this? I have a good mind to let you have lessons in regular trick-riding in Georgia [33] for a year or two. You will know then what it means to be in the service. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

The ensign sat his horse well. Holding his hand to his shako, he looked straight into Platoff's eyes with his own clear brown ones and did not seem to breathe. The color kept ebbing and flowing in his face. He was good to look at. He proffered no word in defense of himself, and there was strength of character in his silence. Platoff's voice involuntarily softened as he asked him:

"What is your name?"

"Minaieff, Your High Excellency"—briskly answered the young Ensign.

"Minaieff? . . . Let me see. . . . What Minaieffs do you belong to?"

"I am the son of Colonel Ivan Kouzmitch Minaieff."

"Is that so? Ivan Kouzmitch's son?" said Platoff with a

[33] The Georgians and other natives of the Caucasus are, like the Cossacks, experts at *djighitovka* or military trick riding.

changed note in his voice. "We were companions in arms in many campaigns, your father and I, always under Souvoroff. Do you hold Souvoroff in reverence?"

"I do, Your High Excellency."

"That's right, my boy—go on doing it! Go and pray before his tomb. Thank him for being let off so easily this time. Wait, let me see. . . . Haven't you got a brother?"

"I have, sir. A brother Ivan."

"Where is he?"

"Here in St. Petersburg, at Jacquinot's boarding-school."

"How old is he?"

"He has just turned seventeen, Your High Excellency."

"And what is he like?"

"He is not quite so tall as I am, and his hair is of a lighter hue, but he is a good-looking boy."

"Bring him to see me next Sunday. I'll have a look at him. He had better leave off trying to stuff himself with the learning of that Jacquinot of yours. I want him to serve in my Ataman Regiment.[84] Let him learn real work fighting the Turks."

"Yes, Your High Excellency."

Putting two fingers to his shako in salute, Platoff dismissed the ensign and walked away to the Fontanka, with the fringes of his epaulets shaking as he walked. His blue shako could be seen for a long time in the crowd. He went up the steep bridge over the Fontanka and disappeared in the direction of the Liteiny Arsenal.

"Well, did you get it strong?" asked Konkoff, who was waiting for Kouzma.

"What did he say, Kouzitchka? Was he very angry? For how long did he send you to the cells?" asked Emmotchka, who had come running up to them.

"Nothing of the sort," proudly answered Kouzma. "He was very kind. He wants my brother Vanka to serve in his

[84] There always were two crack Cossack Regiments: the Don and the Ataman Cossacks. Platoff considered the latter as his own special regiment.

Ataman Regiment. You see what a bit of smart horsemanship means."

"You are inventing, Kouzitchka!"

"I swear it is true."

Here Prince Tiumen decided to take it out of Kouzma.

"I say, Kouzma, you could never ride up to the third floor, where Karlousha lives! You could not!"

"Clear out, Tiumen," said Kouzma.

"You would be afraid to do it. . . . And your Vorontchik would never go up the stairs."

"Oh, wouldn't he?"

"Of course not!"

"Will you bet?"

"I will."

"All right. Karl . . . Karlousha . . . old boy. . . . Listen," said Kouzma, turning to Spalte. "The day after to-morrow is Emma Ivanovna's birthday, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is my sister's *Geburtstag*. She will be nineteen."

"Will there be many people?"

"Well, not very many. Two or three of my fellow-officers, *Mütterchen*,[35] Sofia Adolfovna, Karolina Fedorovna, and Herr Siebel of the German Theater. We are going to have a chocolate party."

"Bother your chocolate!" cried Kouzma. "I'll come on Vorontchik to wish your sister many happy returns of the day. May I?"

"Certainly."

"I shall come riding up the stairs and offer her my congratulations in the dining-room."

"That's fine! But you will be put under arrest?"

"I don't care!"

"You will be turned out of the regiment?"

"I hope not. Anyway, it can't be helped. I have made a bet with this old seal here."

[35] "Little mother."

XI.

Maria Alexéevna, with Nadenka, Bolkonsky, his daughter Annette, and Dournoff, had just returned from the theater. Fofo and Kouzma had also been of the party and Maria Alexéevna had intended to invite them both to supper afterwards, but Fofo had suddenly disappeared before the end of the performance, and, resenting his absence, she felt cross with Kouzma, whom she instinctively held responsible; and so she had decided not to invite the young ensign alone.

Nurse Matveévna and Mademoiselle Marjandi, the French governess, were waiting for them in the dining-room. The table was laid for supper. Dournoff declined to have anything to eat on the plea of "gastric troubles." Maria Alexéevna hardly touched any of the cold sucking-pig in jelly. Only the Bolkonskys and Nadenka ate heartily. Maria Alexéevna was not pleased with her daughter and sulked. She felt that Fofo's disappearance could not have been without a cause and must have been due to his taking offense at something. The conversation flagged. All felt tired after the exaltation of the patriotic play they had just seen. Some animation was brought into the talk by Annette tactfully bringing conversation round to Evgueny and asking about the latest news from him.

"He wrote last year soon after he had arrived in Paris. Such an enthusiastic letter, it was too," said Maria Alexéevna. "Since then, not a word."

"I have been making inquiries," said Dournoff. "At the Admiralty, I was told that his ship, the *Diana,* had sailed with sealed orders, and that there had been no letters from anyone on board for a long time. There had been dreadful storms blowing in the Mediterranean, but the squadron was safe."

"Ah, these storms. . . . And then that dreadful war with the Turks! I am so much perturbed" . . . said Maria Alexéevna. "Boris Nikolaevitch," she went on, turning to Bolkonsky, "let me put this turkey's wing on your plate. It is simply asking for it."

"I won't say no, madam. It looks too good to resist. As to your anxiety, we fully share it. Annette here always goes down on her knees directly the priest begins to pray for 'those who travel by land and sea,' and I beg you to believe that she puts her whole heart into her prayers. Myself also; although an old man, I always say this prayer kneeling."

"Thank you. God bless you and keep you in good health. It can be no easy thing for you to kneel with that pain in your legs."

"It is not, I can assure you. Yet God is my witness that I do."

"I had one letter from our Ambassador in Paris, Prince Kourakin, last year," said Dournoff, adding some rum to his tea. "Our Jenia had come to report with dispatches. The prince was quite taken with him. He found a great likeness to you, Maria Alexéevna. He thought him a very fine-looking boy."

Maria Alexéevna waved her hand with a languishing sigh.

"The things you say, Stepan Fedorovitch!"

"He also wrote he had taken Jenia to a hunting party specially arranged for Napoleon and his Court. They had been out stag-hunting."

"I should not give much for what they call hunting there," said Bolkonsky. "They ought to see ours. That would show them what the real thing is."

After supper, Annette and her father were in a hurry to get home, and Nadenka went to see them off in the hall.

"Well, how are things between you and Kouzma?" whispered Annette as she kissed Nadenka's cheek.

Nadenka blushed and made no answer. Returning to the dining-room she walked slowly, loitering in the reception-room. She was thinking of Kouzma and could not help owning to herself that for the first time she was thinking of him in a new way. So far she had looked upon him as a mere boy, the playmate of her childhood, her faithful page. But that night, after the play, when he had been handing her her light cloak and his hand had touched her bare shoulder, it had been quite a novel sensation she experienced. She felt as though his hand had

burned her, it was so hot. . . . She had been still feeling it as she stepped into the carriage.

She thought of Kouzma as, when furtively looking back over her shoulder, at the theater, she had seen him standing behind her chair with his hands folded over the hilt of his sword, tall and straight, all absorbed in every word of the highly patriotic play which was being acted. Surreptitiously she had watched him follow every scene. With his stalwart figure, his velvety eyebrows fiercely knit in a frown, he had looked the very picture of a true Russian warrior eager to take the field for his country.

Her heart was beating faster and something stirred within her soul. She was like a little bird which has started up from its sleep in the dense foliage of the night shelter at dawn, ready to break out into the joyful song of first love, greeting the first rays of the sun.

Nadenka felt chilly. She drew her lilac shawl tighter round her shoulders and entered the dining-room.

The table had already been cleared. A maid was carrying away the samovar. The old nurse had put out the candles and the melancholy light of the white night pervaded the room.

Mademoiselle Marjandi said good-night and went to her room. Maria Alexéevna still sat in an armchair in a corner of the room. This meant she wanted to talk to Nadenka. "Something or other about Fofo," thought Nadenka, sitting down on a small rocking-chair at her mother's feet.

"Maman, why did you not invite Kouzma to supper?" she asked in French.

Maria Alexéevna made an impatient movement, but did not answer.

"I am afraid, maman, the poor boy had to go to bed hungry. He is an ensign, and so he is forbidden restaurants, and he would not care to go for his food to a tavern or public-house. We ought to have offered him something to eat."

"I am very glad, Nadenka, you have begun this conversation about Kouzma," said Maria Alexéevna. "I have been wishing for some time to have a talk with you about him."

"Are you going to sit up till midnight again?" said the nurse

in a grumbling voice. "Haven't you been talking enough all day?"

"It is not late, nurse. Only eleven. And this white night is so beautiful."

"Beautiful, indeed! It is neither night nor day. No sleeping on such a night. Well, I'll tell Manka [86] to wait for you in your dressing-room. When are you going to get up tomorrow?"

"That depends upon how we sleep, nurse."

"I know that. . . . And all the time the samovar will keep boiling, and the tea will have to be freshly made."

"Don't make the tea before we come," said Maria Alexéevna. "And now go to bed, old woman."

The nurse came up to her mistress, kissed her shoulder [87] and left the room, closing the door behind her.

Mother and daughter were silent. From outside came the soft plashing of the Neva. Somewhere far away, where the palaces were, sentinels were calling out.

"You wished to say something about Kouzma, maman?"

"Look here, Nadia. Kouzma is no longer a boy. He will soon be an officer. The other day I happened to meet the general [88] commanding their regiment. He said: 'The first fight, and Kouzma gets his commission. And if God spares us the misfortune of a war, he will be promoted next autumn all the same.' What are we going to do then?"

Nadenka was silent for a moment.

"What we are going to do?" she said at last, repeating her mother's question. "I don't understand what you mean, maman."

"Shall we go on receiving him?"

"Of course we shall. Why shouldn't we?"

"You are of an age to marry, Nadenka. With a grown-up daughter in the house, young men cannot be received indis-

[86] Diminutive for "Mania," which is itself a diminutive for "Maria."

[87] At the time of serfdom in Russia it was the custom for menials to kiss their masters' and mistresses' shoulder in sign of greeting or farewell, or to thank them for something.

[88] Formerly, regiments of the Russian Guard were always commanded by generals, and regiments of the line by colonels.

criminately. You do not seem to have made your own choice, so it is I who must think of a suitable husband for you. Am I then to do as the merchants do with their daughters and take you, the daughter of noble parents, out and show you off on the promenade at Ekaterinenhof on Whitmonday?[89] Or must I look for a match-maker? You do not seem to realize how much all this weighs on my mind. Tell me frankly, what do you think of Fofo?"

"Of Fofo? And you, maman, what do you think of Kouzma?"

"Of Kouzma?" said Maria Alexéevna, repeating the question, as her daughter had done. "He does not enter my thoughts at all. He is no match for you Who is he? A Cossack, without name or lineage. His father began his military service, just as one of the rank and file, under Souvoroff. You understand he could not possibly marry you."

"And what if I loved him?"

"That's all nonsense, Nadenka! I do not even want to listen to what you might have to say about that. Tell me honestly now, what did you do to offend Fofo? Why did he disappear so suddenly? He is such a nice young man and so worthy of being loved. Is it really possible you do not like Fofo?"

"I don't exactly know what to say, maman. In society, when older people are about, I do like his company. It is interesting to go to the Hermitage Gallery with Fofo. He seems to know everything, and to find an explanation for everything. He can tell what school a picture belongs to, who its painter is, where he was born and what he is celebrated for. To hear him talk of mythology and of the Greek gods, one might think he had been born in Athens. It is a real pleasure to hear him talk French. Our Jenia alone, perhaps, speaks French better than he does. Yet at times my heart somehow does not warm to Fofo, and sometimes I even feel a positive repulsion for him. I watched

[89] It was the custom at that time for rich merchants to drive in an open carriage at the promenade which yearly took place at Ekaterinenhof on Whitmonday, showing off their richly and elaborately dressed daughters before the young men who came there on purpose to look out for a bride.

him at the theater to-night. We were all full of enthusiasm. Kouzma looked as though he were going to draw his sword and go for the Tartars on the stage. But Fofo whispered into my ear: 'What patriotic rot! How can a man write such rubbish!' I felt disgusted. That is why between the acts I asked Kouzma to take Fofo's place behind me."

"There! I knew it was because of you he had left. How could you be so rude! As to Kouzma, it is just this I want to tell you: You put him out of your head. Do you hear? I am ashamed of him before people. His French is too bad for words. *'Horreur, horreur!'* And the expressions he uses!"

"Oh, maman, in that Kouzma only tries to imitate Platoff."

"Ah, that Platoff!" said Maria Alexéevna with animation. "That's a nice one too. Antonsky told me at the theater that Platoff had been invited to lunch with the Empress Maria Fedorovna to-day and had somehow got drunk and had all but had a fall on the slippery parquet floor. He broke a valuable vase. The Empress is an angel, of course, and forgave him everything. All in all, he is but a clown. At a meeting the Emperor had with Napoleon, the latter wanted to see our Cossacks at archery. At our Emperor's request, Platoff himself showed his skill with bow and arrow, and Napoleon sent him a snuff-box after that. He refused to accept it. 'How does that villain with that ugly mug of his dare to confer anything on me?' he said. The Emperor had to order him to take it. That Kouzma of yours is just like him."

"I like men like that," said Nadenka.

"That will do, Nadenka. Put Kouzma out of your head. This is my last word. Somehow, little by little, we'll manage to keep him away," said Maria Alexéevna, getting up.

"Just as you like, maman," answered Nadenka with sudden submissiveness, kissing her mother's hand and cheek.

On the threshold Maria Alexéevna said:

"Did you see how Kouzma looked at that Kolosoff[40] woman to-night? He couldn't take his eyes off her."

Nadenka smiled.

[40] A well-known Russian dancer of the time.

"Nastenka [41] Kolosoff? But there you are wrong. Yes, he looked at her, but the way he did so was quite different from what you think."

"What do you mean?"

Nadenka shrugged her shoulders and did not answer.

Nadenka could not go to sleep for a long time on that luminous April night. She lay awake thinking and turning over many things in her mind. She was just like a little helpless bird restlessly moving about and fluttering its wings. Shamefacedly she thought her thoughts.

"Supposing," she thought, "we are husband and wife, and I am left alone with Fofo after the wedding? . . . What then?" . . . An evening-party at Countess Ellais, one of her mother's most intimate friends, rose up in her mind. Fofo had been sitting alone in a corner, staring at her as she stood at the clavichord looking through some music. Something both oppressive and greedy had been in his glance. It had seemed to her he could see her pink knees through her dress and was gloating over them. She had smoothed her skirt and, blushing, had gone away where he could not follow her with his eyes. "And suppose I had got to stay in a room alone with him. I should die with shame. . . . And his hair is the color of carrots. . . ."

Nadenka drew a blanket over her head, burying her face in the pillow. Her cheeks were burning. Sharp, hot shivers ran through her body.

"But if I had to stay alone with Kouzma? Oh, I could never feel ashamed with him. He blushes like a girl himself when he is with me. To-night when he happened to touch my shoulder, his face flamed up with confusion. There he was standing like a schoolboy, bashful, with downcast eyes, the tall and strong man he is! For he is strong. . . . If he took me by the waist and pressed me to his heart, it would take my breath away. His lips are so fresh and clean. And he has such a dear little black moustache."

She sighed and rang for her maid. She asked for a book

[41] Diminutive for "Anastasia."

and when the maid had gone, she sank back with it on the pillow and fell fast asleep, and slept, to nurse's dismay, until nearly noon.

She dreamed of forts on rocky cliffs and of galloping knights and Kouzma, with his sword drawn, after them in pursuit. They fight, and presently Kouzma has beaten them all, and he leads her to the fort. "All this is yours," he says to her. "All is yours. Only love me as I love you." She clings to him and they sink deeper and deeper into dreamland together.

The old nurse had come in twice that morning. She had wanted to waken her, but had said to herself: "Let her sleep while she has the chance of enjoying the peace and rest of her care-free girlhood," and she had left the room, gently closing the door.

XII.

On Emmotchka Spalte's birthday, a good many people had assembled by four o'clock as her guests in her parents' third-floor flat in Khamov Street.

Emmotchka's mother, a respectable gray-haired lady with cork-screw curls, was busy in the kitchen preparing chocolate with *Schlag-Sahne*.[42] Her father had not yet returned from his lessons, and Emmotchka herself did the honors, receiving her guests, assisted by her brother Karlousha. Sub-lieutenants Stein and Schrank, her two languishing swains, were there to run her errands. Her friends, Sophie Bötcher and Caroline Wetterstrand, two young, but not very pretty girls (Emmotchka knew how to display her own beauty to its best advantage) looked like two maids of honor in waiting on their princess. Finding themselves in these purely German surroundings, where even conversation was often prone to lapse into German, Elmourzin and Konkoff, the Life-Guards Cossacks, and Prince Serbedjab, the Kalmuck, might easily have felt outsiders, had their charming young hostess not had the admirable talent of welding together the heterogeneous elements of her party. She

[42] Whipped cream.

was so ingenuous. She so open-heartedly adored the Life-Guards Regiment as a whole that both Stein and Schrank's jealous silence, and likewise Sophiechen and Carolinchen's awkward manners, passed unnoticed. Besides, no matter how many people there ever were in that house, the feeling always was as though there were no one about but Emmotchka. All the rest were like pieces of furniture or like badly painted pictures in cheap frames. No one ever paid any attention to them, no one listened to them and they were hardly noticed.

It was the same to-day. All were bustling round the blue-eyed heroine of the feast. Emmotchka was unusually excited. Of course, the bet was only a bet, a mere bit of fun with nothing behind it but a wish to show off one's prowess. Nevertheless, there it was: it was her house that had been chosen to serve as arena, and the date of her birthday was the day for which the event had been appointed, and so, proud dreams of a possible future which seemed to promise things much more substantial than a mere bit of passing fun, started swarming in Emmotchka's head. Being a little actress of the German Theater was one thing, but being the wife of a Life-Guards Cossack officer, a man of means, whom Ataman Platoff himself regarded with favor, was another thing altogether, and Emmotchka, who had not had a drop of wine as yet, felt her head going round.

With forethought and so that *"Mamachen"* should not notice it, she had had everything prepared for Kouzma's arrival.

The trick he was going to perform seemed in her opinion to be a regular feat, and Kouzma himself was in her eyes a knight-errant, a hero. On asking old Siebel, the German actor, to come to her birthday party, she had even asked him to have some patriotic verses ready to greet Kouzma with on his arrival.

"But I can only do it in German," he had retorted.

"Well, let it be in German. My Kouzma understands German perfectly."

She had been worrying very much lest old Siebel, who worshiped her as all the others did, should unexpectedly be delayed for some reason, and she drew a breath of relief when she saw

him arrive in a black swallow-tail coat and black silk breeches, wearing a gray wig,—looking just like the poet Goethe. In his hand was a large bunch of violets.

Emmotchka surveyed the room. Three officers of the Izmailov Regiment, two Life-Guards Cossacks, the Kalmuck Prince, Siebel, her friends the German actresses. There were witnesses enough and to spare to make her famous all over the town. Her name would be coupled with that of the handsome Life-Guards Cossack, and this would certainly induce him to make her a proposal of marriage without delay. Even this item of her triumph was duly taken into account by Emmotchka.

The largest room, which had three windows, had been turned into a dining-room. A small table, all green with young birch branches with which it had been decorated, stood in a corner of the room. On its center, on a napkin-covered tray, surrounded with lilies of the valley, was the birthday cake.

Made of rich puff-paste with layers of chocolate cream, it bore Emmotchka's monogram in chocolate Gothic on the top. Nineteen wax candles, to show the number of Emmotchka's years, stood burning round it. In reality, she was twenty today, but at a secret family conclave it had been agreed between parents and children that, with a view to furthering the impression of her youth and freshness, from this year onwards, a new candle should be added only every other year.

On a table in the middle of the room lay a huge *Kringel*[43] glazed with white sugar and studded with raisins. Round it stood cups for the chocolate. Two bottles of sparkling wine were cooling in a china bowl with crushed ice. A bunch of red roses, sent by Stein in the morning, also detorated the table. The chairs had been removed to the wall, where *Papachen's* large leather sofa stood, and a wide empty space had been left round the table.

At four o'clock, the fever of expectation reached its culmination.

Having sent *Mamachen* to the kitchen to prepare the chocolate, Emmotchka had the doors leading to the staircase and

[43] Another kind of cake, made in the form of the letter B and special to namesdays in Germany.

all the doors of the vestibule opened wide, and her young men placed as look-outs at the windows.

The conversation, which had been animated a moment before, was now flagging. Frequent intervals of complete silence set in, and then the only noises one could hear, in the room which smelt of roses, of vanilla and oranges, was the crackling of the nineteen candles round the *Kuchen* and the rustle of the girls' dresses.

"Well, Edmund Albertovitch, can you see anything?" Emmotchka asked Stein, who in his zeal was lying stretched out flat on the window-sill, looking down into the street.

"There is nothing all the way down to the church, Emma Ivanovna."

Emmotchka had snugly ensconced herself in a corner of the sofa. Tender, plump and blue-eyed, and attired in a low-necked light pink tulle dress, which was taken in above the waist with a wide ribbon, she looked like a fresh rosebud; her slender little feet, in their white stockings and black shoes, showed prettily. On her right sat Sophiechen, a dark-haired, plain looking girl, in a pale-green dress with small pink flowers; and on her left, dark-complexioned Carolinchen,—an excellent foil carefully chosen by Emmotchka.

"Life-Guards Cossacks are coming, four of them," reported Schrank.

"Where, where?" . . . Emmotchka jumped up from the sofa and ran to the window.

"Oh, only troopers!" she exclaimed in a disappointed voice.

Four tall Life-Guards Cossacks in their high shakos with scarlet aigrettes, and loose dark-blue trousers, were walking towards the house, on the wooden sidewalk which led past the church.

"What are they coming for, Peter Ivanovitch?" asked Emmotchka, turning to Elmourzin.

"To get the horse down the stairs, I suppose."

"I thought Kouzma was going to ride down?"

"That could not be expected of him. It is difficult enough to come riding up. Going down on horseback would mean crippling both horse and rider."

Emmotchka leant out of the window, looking down into the street.

"There he is! There he is!" she exclaimed, clapping her hands and dancing round the table. "Oh, I do hope nobody will interfere!"

"Sister," said Karlousha in a voice that sounded important and somewhat displeased, "you do not know how to control your feelings."

Meanwhile all had run to the window.

Kouzma in his scarlet jacket and tall shako came riding in the middle of the street on his Vorontchik. Catching sight of Emmotchka's guests at the windows, he waved his hand to them and put Vorontchik to a trot. The horse's hoofs fell rhythmically beating on the cobblestones, and a drowsy watchman who stood with his halberd at the corner of the street near the church, involuntarily stepped aside and followed the rapidly riding ensign with suspicion in his glance He looked and could not believe his eyes. . . . Kouzma rode up to the tall house entrance where the Cossacks were already waiting for him. The men flung the door wide open . . . and in another moment, Kouzma, bending forward in his saddle, had disappeared through the door.

Emmotchka and her guests ran out on the landing and, leaning over the iron rails, looked down on the six flights of stairs, seemingly so airy and light, which came winding up to their floor.

"The stairs won't hold out," said Sophiechen in alarmed tones.

"They will hold out all right, why shouldn't they?" said old Siebel, puffing at his pipe. "The clavichord was carried upstairs, wasn't it, and that was much heavier This horse is light; it is a Cossack horse."

Prince Tiumen ran down the first flight of stairs to see that the bet should be correctly carried out. He was all puffed up with importance.

Downstairs the hall-porter was loudly protesting and swearing at the two troopers who were holding him back. The halberd of the watchman, who was by now completely dazed at

the sight of what was happening, appeared in the doorway. Kouzma and his Vorontchik looked quite small seen from above. Vorontchik snorted and hesitated, refusing to step on the carpet which was laid halfway up the stairs.

"Hee! hee-hee!... He won't go... he won't!"—shrieked Tiumen, screwing up his eyes and all but choking with laughter.

"Give him the reins. . . . Let him have time to look about him!" shouted Elmourzin down to Kouzma.

Tiumen looked at him angrily.

"I must ask you most earnestly, Captain, to abstain from proffering advice. The bet is mine."

"Anyhow, it is as good as lost," cried Konkoff.

Just then Vorontchik who, with a frightened air, had been snorting and sniffing at the steps, came to a sudden decision and, resolutely stepping on the carpet, began walking up the stairs.

"Bravo!" exclaimed old Siebel, who had been watching the rider with keen interest.

It was no easy feat for Vorontchik to master the first flight of stairs and the slippery stone landing. He was shining with sweat, and foam showed from under the straps of his breast-plate and his white-striped scarlet saddle-cloth. The horse halted, drew a deep breath and seemed to hesitate for a moment, but, cheered by an encouraging tap on the shoulder, obeyed the slight touch of the rider's spurs and went on. Louder and louder came the clatter of his hoofs on the steps and his heavy breathing. The other inhabitants of the house, alarmed by the noise, opened the doors of their flats and looked out.

Vorontchik's self-confidence grew with every step he took. The intelligent horse had found his bearings. He had understood what was demanded of him and now he was trying to fulfil his difficult task as quickly as possible. On the smooth shining flagstones of the landing his hind legs slipped, and every time that happened there was danger of his delicate fetlock being caught under the railings and breaking, the railings themselves breaking in their turn under the weight of the horse and his rider who might both have crashed down into the dark

well of the staircase. Kouzma sat calm and motionless, holding Vorontchik's flanks firmly compressed with his legs.

When the rider had reached the top landing, all rushed to the dining-room. Following on their heels and snorting at the unfamiliar objects of furniture, Vorontchik, with Kouzma bending close to his neck, entered the room through the open door and came to a stop near the table.

Tiumen hurriedly opened a bottle of champagne and, filling a glass, offered it to Kouzma on a plate. But Emmotchka snatched away the glass and, excited as she was, emptied it at a draught. With cheeks flaming and eyes shining like a couple of blue stars, she held out the bottle to Kouzma and exclaimed:

"Our hero's health!"

At this, Siebel stepped solemnly forward from the crowd and cleared his throat. With one foot advanced, he began reciting with a very considerable amount of feeling the high-flown verses he had composed for the occasion, but which had, in reality, very little to do with it.

"Für seinen König muss das Volk sich opfern.
Das ist das Schicksal und Gesetz der Welt.
Nichtswürdig ist die Nation, die nicht
Ihr alles freudig setzt an ihre Ehre." [44]

When old Siebel had finished his declamation, Kouzma put the bottle to his lips and emptied it slowly, to the enthusiastic hurrahs of all those who were present. Then starting his horse with a slight pressure of his knees, he rode once round the table and began slowly descending the stairs. The guests, who had suddenly grown very quiet, followed at a distance. All understood that what so far had been a perilous joke, had now become a real danger.

However, everything went off smoothly.

Having regained the street, Kouzma dismounted and the waiting Cossacks took charge of Vorontchik. The guests

[44] Subjects must sacrifice themselves for their King; this is destiny, and the law of the world. A nation that is not ready to give up everything for the sake of its honor, is not worth anything.

crowded round Kouzma, and Emmotchka, in a burst of enthusiasm, threw her bare pink arms round his neck and planted a resounding kiss on either of his cheeks.

With much noise and shouting,—Tiumen, who had lost his bet, shouted and shrieked more than anyone else—all returned to the flat of the Spaltes, where *Mamachen,* entirely dazed and put out by what had happened, was waiting for them with her chocolate, now perfectly cold.

XIII.

THIS prank of Kouzma's of course, soon came to the knowledge of the authorities and the fashionable world of St. Petersburg, and in due course the Ogloblins also heard of it.

All the respectable people who laid down the law in society were revolted at the Cossack ensign's escapade; it was made by them an excuse for recapitulating each of the foolish tricks that had been lately played by the young subalterns of the Guards, and all agreed it was high time for the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Mikhail Illarionovitch Koutouzoff, to put a stop to these boisterous amusements.

"Where is all this going to lead us, I should like to know!" sourly declared Antonsky, in irate Voltarian, going from drawing-room to drawing-room in the town. "Quite recently, some young officers of the Semenov and Izmailov Regiments [45] tied a policeman to a tame bear and threw them into the Moika for a swim. Hardly a night goes by without some piece of vile bullyragging. They walk the streets singing and playing music. The other day, all the sign-boards over the shops in the Vassily Ostrov were exchanged during the night. Next morning, the undertaker's signboard was found hanging over a German baker's shop, and a public-house displayed the inscription: 'Boarding School for Daughters of the Nobility' in a wreath of roses above its entrance. As though all that were

[45] Two smart regiments of the Guards infantry.

not enough, they have now taken to entering private flats riding on horseback. This is the last straw!"

Kouzma's escapade was stamped as a disgrace and Kouzma as a man unfit to serve in the Guards. Count Orloff-Denissoff, who commanded their regiment, had already sent in his report about the incident to the authorities, and was on the point of issuing a most severe order of the day by which Ensign Minaieff was to be reduced to the ranks, dismissed his regiment and transferred to the Line, while the unpleasant possibility of a long arrest hung like a threatening menace over the heads of Captain Elmourzin, Lieutenant Konkoff and Prince Serbedjab-Tiumen. But Ataman Platoff intervened.

He began by having himself invited to dinner by the Empress Maria Fedorovna, whose benevolence toward the Ataman had never yet been found wanting. At dinner, contrary to his habit, he drank neither vodka nor wine, and after dinner, in the blue drawing-room, having respectfully kissed the Empress's little hand, he very cleverly broached the subject of Ensign Minaieff's feat, representing it in such a way that, far from seeming like any act of premeditated rowdyism, it acquired the aspect of a mere piece of boyish fun, due to a superabundance of youth and courage. He told them so gaily about the pretty German girl who was in love with the Life-Guards Cossack and, with everybody looking on, in an outburst of pent-up feeling, had planted a burning kiss on the young Ensign's cheek, that the Empress burst out laughing, rose from her seat and, requesting Platoff to wait for her in the drawing-room, tripped off to the private apartments of her son, the Emperor, where she put matters right.

The result was, that when a detailed report of the whole affair, worded in the severest and most indignant terms, was submitted to the Emperor's consideration by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the Emperor said, with a smile which was gentle as that of a woman:

"Have we not all been young, Mikhail Illarionovitch? My brave Life-Guards Cossacks have been through so much, and so much yet is in store for them. Tear up your report.

I have never heard of it. Moreover, no one has suffered from this bit of boyish fun, or is any the worse for it."

The whole affair was consigned to oblivion, which was all the easier done as, soon after the report, the Life-Guards Cossacks were ordered to the mouth of the river Louga, whence they moved along the shore of the Gulf of Finland and were quartered in the villages of Kernova, Sista, Ourmizna and further on, with the object of guarding the coast. Trouble was brewing on the political horizon at that time, and the English Fleet might be expected outside Cronstadt any day.

Strange as it might appear, the only place where Kouzma's boyish escapade had left a permanent impression, although it had been long forgotten everywhere else, was the household of the Ogloblins. Maria Alexéevna repeatedly reverted to the subject, viciously enlarging on the point that 'that piece of savage rowdyism' had had as its origin merely the wish to please 'some insignificant little German actress,' (she even pretended to have forgotten Emmotchka's name), which clearly proved that the young man was incapable of any feelings of a serious nature. Nadenka shut herself up; she became absent-minded and taciturn. In her heart of hearts she admired Kouzma, but a slight feeling of jealousy had become mingled with this admiration.

As to Emmotchka herself, the very moment her lips had touched Kouzma's ruddy cheek she had definitely lost her heart to him. She wrote verses which she dedicated to him, but did not dare to send. She embroidered bead purses for him, and could not find the courage to present them. She waited for him, she prayed for him, she worshiped him, and every evening, burying her hot face in her pillow, she thought and dreamt of him as one dreams when the heart is first aware of love and burns with real fire.

Emmotchka had even given up the idea of becoming a dramatic actress. She knew Kouzma preferred dancing, therefore she had decided to enter the ballet-school. Just now she was saving money, and her dream was to put on that Finnish peasant-girl costume which she had once worn when dancing with Kouzma, and which had suited her so well, and to go

secretly, if only for one day, to the village of Stramlenie, where, as she had heard from Elmourzin, a post of six Cossacks was stationed, with Lieutenant Birioukoff in command, Kouzma being one of them.

She was so sure of the power of her love, that the idea of any jealousy in connection with Nadenka never entered her head. She even intended to pay her a call at Peterhof, where the Ogloblins had taken a *datcha* [46] at the beginning of June.

Thus three young hearts were consumed by the fire of love during that warm, radiant summer: Kouzma, in his little Finnish village, amid mossy bogs and scrub pines, on the shores of the calm gulf; Emmotchka, in her stuffy room in Khamov Street, preparing for her entrance-examination at the ballet school; and Nadenka at Peterhof, where Fofo, who had never ceased to enjoy Maria Alexéevna's advocacy, had become a frequent visitor.

XIV.

THE large living-room in the Ogloblins' datcha at Peterhof was partitioned into halves by a mahogany screen with green silk panels. Stamped leather armchairs and a table with a green cloth stood in the front part, opposite the French windows, and two candles in heavy bronze stands were upon the table. They had not yet been lighted. Outside, a quiet June evening was descending. Delicious fragrance came from a large dishful of choice strawberries which a servant had just brought in and placed, with a number of plates and silver spoons, next to the candlesticks. The attention of all those who were present seemed to be concentrated on a wicker work-basket which stood on the edge of the table. Maria Alexéevna sat on a leather sofa near the wall, muffling herself up in a yellow shawl. Nadenka had bitten off a large piece of strawberry. The luscious juice gave a deeper tint to her carmine lips. Fofo was drawing little folded slips of paper out of the basket. Old Antonsky, Bolkonsky, and Dournoff sat in armchairs near the table.

[46] A country-house or villa.

Through the tall windows, one could see the bright green of young birch trees and darkish, dim clusters of lilac bushes now just about to fade, then a stretch of sandy road and, beyond, the lawns and lime-trees of the Palace Park.

Maria Alexéevna, Nadenka and their guests were playing at Questions and Answers.

Fofo took little slips of paper from the basket and read questions aloud, while Bolkonsky took from a tumbler other slips containing the answers.

Maria Alexéevna kept wondering why the answers were uncommonly to the point to-day. Antonsky explained this by the fact that the thoughts of everyone present were concentrated on the same subject just now, which made those who wrote the questions inquire about things which were in the minds of those who wrote the answers.

Fofo read:

"Who will win in the coming war?"

Nadenka herself had written this. When she wrote it, she had been thinking of all she had heard about the inevitability of war with that monster Napoleon, the self-styled Emperor. And now her thoughts turned to her brother, lost somewhere far away in the Mediterranean, and to that other who even then, mounted on his horse, might be on guard on the shore of the calm gulf and, perhaps, thinking of her.

She had involuntarily put a double meaning into her question. She had been thinking of a war between Russia and Napoleon to settle the question of world dominion, but also of that other war of hearts which, though most people might not see it, she clearly saw must inevitably break out between the two rivals, Kouzma and Fofo.

Although aware how foolish it was of her, she waited anxiously for the answer.

"The kindest of the two."

"Who is the kindest?" mused Nadenka. "Napoleon or Alexander? . . . Kouzma or Fofo?"

"Who will be our Emperor's ally?"

Nadenka did not know who had written this. Dournoff, probably, or, may be, maman? But she immediately began to

put her own thoughts into this question. "Who will be Kouzma's ally? Who will intercede for him with maman?" And again she waited for an answer, with the same strange anxiety which she could not help finding ridiculous.

As though on purpose, Bolkonsky was a long time fumbling with the folded scrap containing the answer.

"Courage and patience," he read out at last.

Nadenka explained the answer in her own way. "Certainly," she thought, "Kouzma does not lack courage and patience. And I myself, must also bear all attacks against our love with courage and patience."

"Do we need many troops for victory?" read Fofo.

"It's all about war and war and nothing but war," sighed Maria Alexéevna. "Is there really no way for us to avoid this new war?"

"Russia," read Bolkonsky.

"One cannot say this is very comprehensible," said Dournoff.

"Can we rely firmly on our neighbors?" Fofo read.

This also had been written by Nadenka. And when writing it, it had been the Minaieffs she had meant.

"Our strength lies in God," read Bolkonsky.

Nadenka imperceptibly lifted her eyes to the icon and thought: "Help me, oh Lord! Strengthen me. Teach me to be wise."

When all the papers had been read, Antonsky took a snuff-box from his waistcoat and began noisily to fill his nose with snuff. Maria Alexéevna sighed. The smell of tobacco reminded her of her late husband.

"Nadenka, you ought to give us some music" she said, turning to her daughter.

Nadenka obediently went into the next room. Purple twilight reigned there. The large windows and the glass doors were opened, and bushes of blossoming lilac peeped into the room. A military band was playing in the Palace Park, and the brasses sounded sweet and melancholy, in the distance. The trees in the Park were motionless. The faint tang of the sea

close by and the fragrance of the fading lilac blossoms came through the windows.

Nadenka went to the carved shelf where the music lay and paused, lost in thought. She had not noticed that Fofo had followed, and started when she heard him say:

"Shall I light the candles, Nadejda Nikolaevna?"

"No, don't," said Nadenka in a low voice. "The twilight is too beautiful. I shall play by heart."

The melody sounded very softly. Nadenka's eyes looked black. Her hands shone white on the keys and her shoulders moved gently under the blue ribbon which encircled them. Looking pensively in front of her, she gave herself up entirely to her music and to her thoughts, and only at times fragments of what Fofo was saying reached her consciousness. As always, he expressed himself in perfect French, interspersing his speech with phrases and verses in Russian.

"Have you heard the latest poem by Karamzin Nadejda Nikolaevna? It is so charming," he said, and began reciting:

"The hearts of lovers are united
Not by a chain, but by a thread.
The slightest breeze that blows between them,
The lightest butterfly hovering near
May cause the thread to break, and then
Those hearts will coldly draw apart. . . ."

Fofo stopped, waiting for Nadenka to say something in answer, but she went on playing. She only bent her head, and Fofo could see, in the melting purple twilight, her charming neck with its burden of russet tresses.

"Te voilà, pauvre humanité[47] . . ." he sighed.

Nadenka winced. She played louder, pressing on the pedal and running her fingers rapidly over the keys.

Fofo saw those little fingers straining so that they seemed about to break. The brass strings droned, drowning his words. In the next room, Dournoff was relating something in a loud voice, and old Antonsky's laughter could be heard, sounding like the bleating of a sheep.

[47] "There you are, poor humanity. . . ."

"Mademoiselle, je vous aime," Fofo said at last decisively.

"O Lord!" thought Nadenka, "there they are laughing, while here my fate is at hand. He is going to propose! But I cannot. . . . I must not accept him. But how am I to refuse without offending him? I hope to Heaven I have not heard right?" Another face rose before her, as though alive. The blood rushed to her cheeks, and two false notes one after the other rang on the piano. But she recovered her self-control.

"Je vous demande votre main. . . . Consentez-vous à m'épouser?" [48] Fofo went on firmly.

Alas, there was no doubt; she had heard aright.

Nadenka kept silent and went on playing, but her bosom was heaving. Fofo could see, even in the twilight, that her shoulders and neck were suffused with pink.

"Donnez-moi de grâce une réponse. Que Dieu vous inspire une réponse favorable et ce qui sera le plus convenable pour votre bonheur. . . ." [49]

Nadenka took both her hands off the keys at once. In the next room Dournoff and Antonsky were having a heated discussion about something, and Bolkonsky was trying to calm them. Maria Alexéevna was laughing. One could hear the clatter of plates and spoons. They were eating strawberries. All these sounds only seemed to enhance the ominous silence of the night that entered through the open door. On the lawn behind the lilac-bushes, the lime trees, maples and birches were clearly outlined like so many curly shadows. Bewitched by this white summer night, the Park stood like a conspirator and also seemed to be waiting for her answer.

Nadenka got up and went to the door without looking at Fofo. The freshness of the night cooled her flaming cheeks. Her heart was beating painfully. She felt both afraid and ashamed. She had to refuse Fofo, and yet did not know how to begin. She could not find adequate words for it. Now that Fofo had spoken, he suddenly seemed less displeasing to

[48] "I ask for your hand. Do you consent to marry me?"

[49] "For Heaven's sake give me an answer. May God inspire you with a favorable one, and with what is most suitable to your happiness."

her than before. A new feeling of pity for him began to stir in her heart.

"Nadejda Nikolaevna?" Fofo reminded her of his presence in a voice that was full of entreaty, and yet did not lack assurance.

Nadenka turned to him. Now she was in the shadow and he was standing in the clear mellow light. His face was pale, and his burning eyes looked sharp and greedy. Reddish hair grew on his temples and thin strands of it covered the top of his head. His long, knotty fingers twitched, twisting and crumpling his handkerchief. Nadenka suddenly felt a wave of fear and repulsion come over her. "His hair is as red as red can be. . . . It is as red as carrots . . ." was the thought that flashed through her mind.

"May I speak to your mother?" began Fofo, but Nadenka stopped him with a gesture of her hand.

"No," she said with a sudden decisiveness which surprised her. "No. . . . Don't say anything. . . . . I don't care for you. . . ."

As though frightened at what she had said, Nadenka, gathering up the folds of her skirt, ran out on the veranda and thence into the garden. She opened the gate and, crossing the road, took a path she had often used, slipped across the edge of the Park and found herself standing in a wide glade overlooking the sea, resplendent in the glory of rosy evening coloring. The line of the Cronstadt fortifications was clearly visible in the distance. Nadenka paused, pressing her hands to her bosom, as though trying to silence her uncontrollably beating heart.

"Kouzma," she thought, looking at the sea with eyes that glittered with tears. "Why don't you come? I love you so!"

XV.

How it had happened, Kouzma himself was unable to comprehend. Almost the day before, he had been humming some verses of Denis Davydoff [50] which had taken his fancy:

"Shall we give the fair enchantress
Our heart to break in vain . . . ?"

And now, the fair enchantress had appeared in person and had his heart.

No wonder either. For had not the weather itself kept glorious all these days and thus precipitated events? The deep blue gulf lay asleep under an intense sun. The heavens played with the clouds, building castles and jig-saw puzzles and reflecting intricate designs on the mirror of the motionless sea. The horizon was as if piled with heavy, luxurious, bulging pillows, one on the top of another in a gargantuan heap. And presently, the world of cushions had disappeared and golden palaces stood towering above the Finnish coast. They would go, in their turn, and one saw cavalry charging at a mad gallop. The horses' manes turned to grey and to black. The next moment everything had faded away. Perhaps there would appear a solitary Turk in a turban, puffing at his pipe from which pearls rose into the azure breaking up into little cockle-shells, or growing into vast armadas with sparkling sails.

"Angels must be playing with the clouds," thought Kouzma.

He had just had a dip in the sea and was stretched half-naked on the thick golden sand. Lazy lapping of the waves, rustling of the broken stems of last year's reeds,—the sound made him drowsy. But he fought it down. It was sinful to sleep. For if a man sleeps all night and also in the day-time, he may easily sleep away the Kingdom of Heaven.

[50] A well known figure of the time. He was a Hussar of the Guards and later on a volunteer, or "partisan" as they were called in Russia, in the war with Napoleon. He also wrote verses which were set to music. He appears in Tolstoi's *War and Peace* under the name of Vasska Denissoff.

Close by, where a narrow spit of land protruded into the sea, pine-trees reached down to the very water. The forest buzzed with its faint and mysterious voices. Birds called to one another. A black coastguard vessel, looking very near, stood off shore. It was signalling to the forts of Cronstadt, some service message. There was not another boat of any kind on the sea. No wonder either: a dead calm had set in, lasting for over a week already. With no wind, there was absolutely no possibility of the English fleet turning up. All the posts had been moved, and the Cossacks set to mowing grass in the meadows.

Sometimes Kouzma had also gone to the meadows with the hay-makers. There, the air was full of the sweetness of pink clover and honey. A bluebell would droop its head under its wealth of flowers. A yellow-orange, fur-coated bumblebee would get into a calyx and buzz furiously inside it. Funny creature, to dress so warmly in this hot summer weather! Butterflies would be fluttering about, a yellow machaon flapping jagged wings above the mown grass, and a lark, invisible against the blinding sunlight, would warble in the limitless blue.

An unfamiliar feeling of soft languor and a violent craving for love had come over Kouzma. He would have liked to embrace, to press, to crush to his heart . . . to look into eyes that implored for pity. "You hurt me, Kouzma! Let me go, you silly boy!" . . . He wished to see those eyes fill with glistening tears. They would be like corn-flowers under the morning dew.

He had already written about Nadenka to his father, sending the letter by a friend of his who chanced to go to the Don. The old man had seemed pleased and had given his consent to their marriage. He had told his son to come and see him in the autumn, and had prepared fifty thousand rubles as a wedding gift. He wrote that Kouzma was to buy a house in St. Petersburg and furnish it handsomely. Nadenka should not regret having married a Cossack.

There were times when another girl's image rose before his mind. But Kouzma only smiled self-complacently. "That's nothing but nonsense. . . . The girl is only fooling." Yet an

evil voice whispered insinuatingly: "I must say, though—it felt rather nice when Emmotchka gave me that kiss, on the steps of her house. Just here it was," and the recollection was so vivid that he believed he could still feel the spot on his cheek where the tremulous lips of the girl had scorched it.

Kouzma was lying on the sand. His feet were bare. He had nothing on but his shirt. His red cap and jacket, his boots and dark-blue trousers were lying near a boulder. It was warm, and he felt too lazy to dress.

Kouzma looked at the boulder. Two letters: N and M—standing for "Nadenka Minaieff" were engraved on it with a steel chisel. It was he who had engraved them, taking care nobody should see him do it. Centuries would pass, but the memory of his undying love would remain for ever, unalterable like this rock.

"Kouzma Ivanovitch! . . . Iva-nytch!"—suddenly came a voice, shouting from the grass-grown road along the shore.

Kouzma raised himself lazily on his elbow. Who could that be?

A Cossack came galloping towards him, bare-headed. Kouzma tried to make out who it was. "Pykhovkin, of course. A smart Cossack, and most obliging. Lieutenant Birioukoff must have sent him."

The Cossack jumped from his horse.

"What is it, Pykhovkin? Is it a letter with three feathers?" [51]

"There is no letter, Kouzma Ivanovitch. It is something quite different. It is a secret."

Pykhovkin bent over Kouzma. The man smelt of liquor.

"Where did you manage to get drunk so early in the morning?"

Pykhovkin smiled, confused. "Oh, just a little," he said. "I was offered a drink. . . . A girl is waiting for you in the village, Kouzma Ivanovitch."

"What girl?"

[51] Three pigeon's feathers on the seal meant great haste. It meant that one had to gallop at full speed. Two feathers meant simply galloping. One feather meant trotting and none at all riding at a foot-pace.

"A fine girl. She is dressed like a Finnish peasant girl, but one can see she is a lady. She has put up at Repone's. You know, the house at the end of the village, the new white one.[52] She has sent for you."

"But who is she?"

"She didn't tell me. She only said: Find Ensign Minaieff and bring him to me. Tell him it is urgent."

"But what does she look like?"

"She is very fair, and her skin is white. She looks like a *Tchoukhonka*[53] but she isn't one. Her hands are much too clean. And her face tells its story."

Kouzma hurriedly dressed. Who could it be? Much as he tried he could not think of anyone. "It must be some girl from Narva or Yamburg."

Riding along the field road he hummed:

"Shall we give the fair enchantress
Our heart to break in vain? . . ."

"No!"—he thought. "If we do give it, it shall not be in vain."

"Emmotchka!"

How had he not thought of her? How had he not guessed that she alone was capable of doing such a thing?

Kouzma had hardly had time to cross the wooden threshold of the *izba*[54] when Emmotchka threw her arms round his neck, and covered his cheeks and lips with passionate kisses.

"You are mine . . . mine . . . Dearest . . . Beloved . . . !"

At last Kouzma gently disengaged himself from her embrace. He took her by the waist and made her sit down on the wooden sofa, like a doll. And a little doll too she looked. She was wearing the same costume of a Finnish peasant girl she had worn, years ago when dancing with Kouzma at the

[52] Simple Finnish peasant houses were let out for hire on the shore of the Gulf of Finland in summer.

[53] Finnish peasant-woman or girl.

[54] Peasant house.

Ogloblins': a black velvet bodice laced up with crimson ribbon, a green skirt, a yellow apron striped with black. Emmotchka had somewhat grown out of it, which only served to show the more the prettiness of her white-stockinged feet and tiny black shoes. Her arms were bare to the elbow; she had a green ribbon in her hair.

"Emmotchka! What does it all mean?"

Her eyes, as blue as a pair of Shemakha [55] turquoises, looked at him with sad devotion. Tears glistened round the turquoises, and there was so much simple-hearted and openly avowed love in those eyes that Kouzma felt utterly disconcerted.

After that memorable day when Kouzma had made his theatrical gesture, for her sake, as she thought, he had become her knight and she had started calling him her own.

Two days later she had invited him to her house and he had come to see her. Sophiechen had also been there. Sophiechen had played on the clavichord, while Kouzma and Emmotchka had sung a duet from *The Magic Flute*.

"Mann und Weib und Weib und Mann,
Reichen an die Gottheit an" [56]

As she listened to Kouzma's handsome baritone blending with her own voice, it had seemed to Emmotchka that things were as plain as they could possibly be. She had expected that everything would be decided there and then. But without declaring himself, Kouzma had gone away with that silly goose, Sophiechen, to see her home. It had been Sophiechen's presence that had prevented him from speaking, of course. Next time they met Emmotchka would manage to be alone with him, and then everything would be different. However, the Cossacks had soon after been sent out to guard the coast and this necessarily put off the issue she had been cherishing in her mind.

On Whit-Monday on the promenade at Ekaterinenburg, Emmotchka had met Captain Elmourzin, from whom, by cautious questioning, she had discovered where Kouzma was

[55] A province of the Caucasus, on the frontier of Persia.

[56] "Husband and wife and wife and husband,
Together they almost attain divinity."

quartered. He had also hinted that Kouzma was probably going to marry Nadenka Ogloblin after his promotion to the rank of officer.

"It cannot be," Emmotchka had thought on her way back from Ekaterinenhof. "It is downright impossible. Maria Alexéevna will never let Nadenka marry Kouzma; she has a husband of her own choice for her,—Fofo." Still the thought had been worrying her, and, in order to verify Elmourzin's statement, Emmotchka had risked calling on the Ogloblins at Peterhof. After what had happened on her birthday, Maria Alexéevna might, of course, be expected to refuse to receive her. But Emmotchka dared to risk it. For the sake of Kouzma she was prepared to undergo any kind of humiliation—all she wanted was to know the truth about him. She had been received, however. Maria Alexéevna had even stressed her friendliness. Nadenka, on the other hand, had been very reserved, and Emmotchka had even thought she could see traces of recent tears in her face.

On taking leave of Emmotchka, Maria Alexéevna had said in a tone of friendly reproach:

"But you have been leading our Kouzma a dance, poor boy! Don't you think you ought to come to some decision?"

Nadenka had blushed violently and had left the room. But Emmotchka had understood. And she had decided to take matters into her own hands.

Emmotchka did not stop to think whether what she was going to do was good or evil. She had to win Kouzma. If she did not take the first step, he was too shy and would never have the courage to do it. She had to win him at all costs.

She had an uncle living in Narva and, at her request, her parents had consented to let her go to stay with him for a time and have a rest after the strain of life in dusty St. Petersburg. But on her way there she had left the main road at a turning she had hear of from Elmourzin, and now here she was in an unknown out-of-the-way village, in a simple izba, but near the man she loved.

Emmotchka sat on the wooden sofa. Kouzma stood in front of her with his back to the window. All doubt and hesitation

had fled from Emmotchka's heart and she openly showed her love, failing to realize, in her excited state of mind, that he did not seem to reciprocate it.

"My dearest love," tenderly said Emmotchka, "How thin you are and how sunburnt, poor boy. . . . Your work is wearing you out!"

"But why did you risk it, Emmotchka? You here? And all alone?"

"But these are country houses to let for the summer?" she said looking up at him with tranquil and innocent eyes. "Anyone has the right to live here."

"But your parents?"

"They think I am with my uncle at Narva."

"And supposing they discover the truth?"

"Well, I'll find a way out of it. Why should you worry about it? This is my business, not yours. . . . You know, I saw Peter Ivanovitch on Whit-Monday, and he told me you would get your commission in the autumn. And how is your Vorontchik? What a horse! How bravely he went up the stairs! But with a rider like you to carry he could not help it, I suppose."

Emmotchka got up from the sofa. She stretched herself—she felt a little tired after her journey—and went up to Kouzma. She took him by the arm and looked into his eyes.

"How serious you are! What a grumpy old thing you look! Are you sorry I have come?"

Her perfumed little palm touched his forehead, and her delicate little fingers began playing with a lock of auburn hair that was hanging over his brow.

"How soft your hair is! No girl's hair could be softer. No, you are not angry. You only pretend to be."

Her soft pink lips here begged for a kiss. However daring Kouzma might be in the company of men, and however much he tried to make himself believe that the verses Denis Davydoff had written applied to him, a woman's caress was a thing still unknown to him. He felt utterly confused and disconcertedly looked down at this fresh girlish face in its frame of golden

curls, which was like the faces of the women in Greuze's pictures that Jacquinot used to make his pupils copy.

"Well, old cross-patch?"

Kouzma bent down and timidly kissed her rosy lips.

"Isn't it nice?"—she said and burst out laughing gaily. Her face was radiating such happiness, such childish joy, that Kouzma suddenly felt very gay himself. His confusion was passing. Hesitatingly he put his arm round her slender waist. Through the velvet bodice he could feel how supple it was, and a wave of responsive tenderness rose in his heart.

"How small she is . . ." he thought, "how really like a little doll."

They sat down side by side on the sofa. Kouzma's strong arm pressed the girl's waist ever harder and harder, and Emmotchka could feel the hot pulsations of his blood. She had an irresistible wish to talk and talk and never stop. Laying her head on his bosom, she babbled disconnectedly about their childish games and dances, about the day when she had met him on the Quay, and about how he had come riding up the stairs to her parents' flat.

"You might have broken your neck. . . . You really were quite mad. You did it for my sake, didn't you?"

"No," Kouzma truthfully answered "It was simply a bet. Serbedjab had egged me on."

"How unkind you are! Why don't you say you did it for my sake? You were thinking of me, were you not?"

"Honestly speaking, no."

"Nasty boy! Do say it was for me you did it. It doesn't cost you anything to say it."

"But it wasn't. . . ." Kouzma continued to demur.

"Ah . . . it wasn't?"

Her words sounded angry, but her eyes did not look it. Her little hand stroked his cheeks caressingly, it smoothed his young, fluffy moustache, it played with his eyelashes.

"You look so funny. You look like a big, big hare, like one of those they sell at country fairs, one of those drum-beating hares, you know. . . . Can you beat a drum?"

Kouzma obediently and shyly submitted to her caresses. Only the vein on his forehead swelled.

There was a knock at the door. A *Tchoukhonka,*[57] a young, though rather ugly looking girl, came in and laid the table-cloth. She brought some plates, knives, forks and glasses, some vodka, Swedish punch,[58] black bread, an omelet, some ham, roast chicken, and some curds.

"Let's have lunch. I am awfully hungry. Aren't you?"

Kouzma ate with a good appetite, for it was his dinner-hour.

After their meal they went for a walk in the forest. They picked strawberries, played at hide and seek, hallooing to each other and challenging each other for a run. Then they tried each other's strength, interlacing fingers and endeavoring to make the other kneel.

"You hurt me . . .! Let me go! . . . You will break my fingers," Emmotchka cried, writhing with pain.

"Get down on your knees and I'll let you go."

"I shan't. I'll make you get down on your knees yourself."

And he knelt before her, pretending to be beaten.

"Dearest. . . . My darling. . . . I didn't hurt you?"

In the evening, they ate under a tree in the garden and talked for a long time.

"You remember Evgueny as a sailor boy?"

"I wonder where he is now?"

"Peter Ivanovitch told me there was no news whatever of him. And Sophiechen? 'Mann und Weib, und Weib und Mann? . . .' She is in love with you. But how could it be otherwise? You are like sunshine. You shine for everybody. Why don't you take singing lessons? You have such a fine voice."

As though by tacit agreement, neither Kouzma nor Emmotchka mentioned Nadenka's name.

When Kouzma was getting on his hungry Vorontchik Emmotchka saw him off, and her eyes were shining like two blue stars.

"Good-night. We shall see each other soon."

[57] Finnish peasant-girl.

[58] A kind of cheap liqueur.

Kouzma rode back without any idea what the time was. Both in front of him and behind the sky was aflame, and it was impossible to make out where the sun had set and where it was preparing to rise. Kouzma's head still swam from those tender caresses. He longed to feel once more that slender and pliant body in his arms.

He checked the pace of his horse and at last stopped altogether.

The sun was rising. In front of him, beyond the dewy meadow, yellow fire had splashed over the horizon. Rays of light shot up in the sky, and the grass sparkled, hung with diamonds.

A sharp and sweet temptation took hold of Kouzma and held him entirely in its grasp. It seemed as though all his young blood, every drop of which was pulsing with the joy of life, had rushed to his heart.

Kouzma turned his horse abruptly and galloped back at full speed.

Emmotchka seemed to have been waiting for him, as though she had known he would come back.

He saw her standing at the open window in her long, thin nightgown, with her hair down her back. The window rapidly closed, but the door opened and Kouzma, aglow with his mad gallop and with excitement, caught her in his arms. A pair of blue eyes that seemed to have suddenly grown dark looked straight into his own. There was passion in them, and shame.

As though coming over far distances, Nadenka's image flashed painfully through Kouzma's mind. "All is lost now," he thought with terror. But it was too late to consider.

XVI.

EVGUENY'S fate was firmly bound up with something which, although no living creature, seemed endowed with a life of its

own, requiring all his attention, absorbing all his thoughts, and demanding all his love. It was the *Diana.* Now it was the wind, now the ship's cordage that called for his attention, and then the tidiness of the ship or her course. There where two hundred men had but one thought:—that all should be spick and span, that the brass guns should shine as though cast in pure gold, that the sails should be drawing evenly, that the angle at which top-masts and yards crossed should nowhere differ, that nothing should creak anywhere,—Evgueny could not but think and act with them.

The blue depths seethed and foamed; the waves hissed, striking the sides of the hull. All about, as far as the eye could reach, was the cloudless sky and the blue sea spangled with gold and with white foam. The African coast had dropped out of sight long ago. The sea was deserted, only gulls darted with anxious cries over the stern. Dolphins appeared from time to time. They gambolled alongside the ship, thrusting their snouts forward, curving their bodies, their smooth backs flashing.

The men of the crew lay on the forecastle, warming themselves in the sun. The slow, melodious tunes of Russia alternated with their healthy laughter or the brisk speech of someone telling a story.

"How can people like those men there live in the world at all?"—wondered Evgueny. "Yet they do, even manage to be happy in their own way. Each of them probably has a sweetheart at home. They wait. . . . They wait for years. . . . Because love is not the only thing; there is also duty."

Evgueny clenched his fists and set his jaw.

"Where can truth be found?" he thought. "Can it be possible that those sailors comprehend it?"

The ship held on her course, turned north and, running along the coast, put in at the Italian ports in search of the squadron. At Messina, the officers were lavishly entertained in the hall of an hotel in the town by the Russian Minister, Dmitri Pavlovitch Tatistcheff, who had purposely arrived from Palermo to meet the Russian sailors.

They ate caviare and *bliny*[59] prepared by the ship's cook who had been sent from the corvette for this special purpose. They talked of Russia and drank Italian Chianti out of bulging and strange-looking bottles. Evgueny felt dizzy and so did many others after their long absence from terra firma, and it seemed to him as though the walls of the hall swayed and the very floor moved underfoot.

Evgueny took advantage of everybody being ashore, and, returning before the others to his ship, managed to have a talk with Kolomyitzeff and ask for permission to tender his resignation. But the Captain only waved his hands.

"Without the Admiral I can do nothing!" he cried angrily, rolling his round eyes. "And even then I would refuse. . . . Don't you understand, sir? We are at war with the Turks. An officer does not tender in his resignation at such a time. And besides, bless you,[60] do you know what there was in that dispatch you brought? There may be another war! Yes, sir, and what a war! All must be present now to answer the roll-call. All must serve His Majesty."

"Another war, Vsevolod Stepanovitch? With whom?" asked Evgueny, growing pale.

Old "Bless You" looked confused. He felt that he had spoken too freely.

"That's no business of yours," he answered. "And what difference can it make? If we are told to fight the Swedes, we'll just fight the Swedes. If it is Bonaparte, we will fight Bonaparte. If we are ordered to mess up the English Fleet, we shall do just that, and in such a style too, bless you, that if Nelson himself were to come to life, he would not know how to patch up the bits. Our business is to obey the Emperor. Leave the service? That will come later on. You haven't served enough yet. You can wait another trifle of ten years or so!"

They had thought to find the Russian fleet at Corfu, but it

[59] A kind of pancakes eaten with melted butter, sour cream, or caviare. A Russian national dish, mostly eaten during Shrove Week.

[60] A favorite ejaculation of Captain Kolomyitzeff's, which he uses indiscriminately when addressing people.

was not there. However, they heard at last that it was at Bocca-di-Cattaro, and their course there. They were tortured with impatience. All on board the *Diana,* whether high or low, were consumed with the wish to learn their true destination at last. They even crammed on sail in their zeal, and the corvette trembled like a fiery steed as she scudded before a fair wind.

At last, on the 1st of January, through the pale light of a winter-sun, some peach colored rocks, white houses and the tower of a lighthouse appeared. The crew shortened sail. Carrying only jib, mizzen and main top-sail, gaily decked with flags, with her black-uniformed and round-hatted crew under arms lined up on deck, and herself enveloped in rolling clouds of smoke, from the salute of her guns, the *Diana* glided, slowly cleaving the malachite waters, into the turbid roadstead of Cattaro, where the whole of Admiral Seniavin's squadron lay at anchor.

She did not have time to drop her own anchors before sloops and gigs and long-boats came flying over the water like white gulls from all the ships, with officers on board who were hurrying to get news from Russia at last, and letters and parcels from their friends and relations.

A dark-blue, twelve-oared cutter with a gold stripe about its gunwale and flying the Admiral's flag, gave way from the flagship *Selafail.* The Admiral was coming to inspect the newcomer.

Joyful meetings with old schoolmates now aboard other ships, much yarning about their cruise, and merry outings to the taverns of the port made the time seem to fly, and a week slipped by. Now aboard one and now aboard another of the ships of the line, there was music and dancing. The decks were hung with many colored lanterns and with garlands of laurel and magnolia leaves, and the officers danced with the dark-haired beauties of Cattaro. All this while Evgueny could not manage to obtain leave from old "Bless You," for a personal interview with the Admiral. "Bless You," as though on purpose, kept him busy and did not let him out of sight. The masts of the *Diana* had to be righted, her rigging overhauled, her sides painted, and gunpowder taken aboard. Spells of work

and duty on board followed one another, and after duty, balls and dancing.

On the sixth of January, a solemn service was held on board the flagship, and the rite of blessing the waters was performed, all the ships of the squadron firing broadsides in salute, after which the Admiral received the congratulations of his officers. It was only then that Evgueny obtained a personal appointment with the Admiral for the next day.

At five o'clock next morning, a single cannon-shot however, boomed from the *Selafail*. In the twilight of approaching dawn, signal flags, fluttering in the wind, made the following signal from the Admiral:

"Prepare to weigh anchor."

It was a fresh, damp morning. A strong off-shore wind wrinkled the waves on the wide bay. White crests flashed here and there. The channel looked dark and forbidding; from beyond it came the ominous thunder of the sea.

All were working under the eyes of the Admiral and of the whole squadron, and therefore did their best to make a good showing. Anchors were weighed and sails set and trimmed—all the ships' companies were at work down to the last squad, and Evgueny saw it was useless even to think of seeing the Admiral. "I only hope to God," he thought, "all this is nothing but drill. I shall go to the Admiral when it is over."

At noon there was dinner, and at three in the afternoon, ship after ship, falling into line according to the order of their sailing, began to draw out of the bay, making for Corfu.

Not all the ships had had time to reach the open sea, when the wind suddenly changed to a contrary one Freshening towards evening, it grew into a fierce gale.

The *Diana* lay close to the wind, tacking about in the teeth of the gale. At first the huge silhouettes of the ships of the line were still distinguishable, and their lights could be seen in the murk, but soon they, too, disappeared. The *Diana's* speed was inferior to theirs; she could not hold so steadily against the wind and began to lag behind. The night passed and an overcast, rainy morning set in. The gale was still howling, black waves rose and hissed overside, and at each roll of the

ship, it was evident that the *Diana* was steadily being borne in the direction of Curzola. The Admiral's fleet had disappeared out of sight altogether.

Old "Bless You" summoned Gangart, his senior Lieutenant, and the mate to the poop and, after a long conversation with them, gave the order to run before the wind to the island of Curzola.

They reached it in the afternoon. There they found the ships *Elena* and *Uryil,* stationed there to defend the fortress of Curzola.

The storm lasted for a whole fortnight. It was only on the night of January 24th that the contrary wind changed at last, and became fair without losing its strength. All sail was set on the *Diana* and, with an experienced pilot, a Slav from Cattaro, on board, she left the shelter of Curzola.

But the ship had scarcely gained the open sea when she was obliged to take in all sail except the main topsail. The wind was so strong that, with this one sail, the *Diana* sped on at fifteen knots. Thus for twenty-four hours she scudded before the howling storm, leaving a wide and foaming wake behind her.

Evgueny was on night watch. Wrapped in his cloak, gloomy and embittered, he automatically riveted his eyes on the compass-card visible in the wavering light of the binnacle lamp. At times the sea in front of him disappeared as though engulfed in an abyss, and then it would overhang the bows in mountainous combers. Evgueny stood indifferent to everything. Suddenly he felt someone's presence behind him. He turned round. Old "Bless You" and the pilot stood there.

For a long time the Captain peered into the cloud-laden horizon. Then he conferred with the pilot in a disconnected mixture of Italian, Russian and English, looking (or so it seemed to Evgueny) with anxiety at the compass needle moving as though alive under the thick glass.

All was darkness and chaos. The strong following wind made Evgueny's cloak cling to his body. A fiendish howling came from masts and shrouds. Suddenly, far away, a blinding zigzag of lightning, flashing for the fraction of a second, cleft the vast darkness of the night, and was gone. Simultane-

ously Kolomyitzeff's hand, which was cold and wet with the sea spray, gripped Evgueny's hand; and, drowning the howl of the gale, the Captain cried out:

"All hands on deck!"

All the ship's company pressed, apprehensively, close to the bulwarks. An ugly thunderstorm was approaching over the sea. The thunder rolled almost continuously. Flash followed flash, and presently a terrific clap shook the air just over the mastheads. The *Diana* tossed about like a chip of wood on the waves. The main topsail filled with wind, swelling out so that the rigging creaked, and then suddenly emptied again, at last collapsing with a loud crash like a cannon-shot. A stifling, sulphurous smell rose up from the sea. The lightning kept circling all around the ship, and at every new clap of thunder the crew believed their last moment had come.

The sailors on the forecastle began to chant *Our Father,* and Evgueny with alarm in his heart listened to the rise and fall of voices which the wind carried away. The ship moaned and creaked. All her frames, her clamps and her cross-beams, which had always been so firm, had suddenly been shaken loose and she had become a little toy, a mere birch-bark box, gripped in the steel clutch of some giant's hand. Avalanches of black water reared up astern, carrying the ship on their back, down long slopes of chaotic blackness.

Evgueny stood gripping the wooden rails. The Captain and the pilot stood next to him, and Lieutenant Stolnikoff on his other hand.

"Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven . . ." with sudden clearness came the singing from the forecastle and simultaneously Stolnikoff shouted, bending to Evgueny's ear:

"It's the end, Jenia; let us die like honest men!"

A fresh thunderbolt seemed to rend the heavens in two, and Evgueny could hardly hear his words. With his mind empty, void of thought, he stood motionless, staring ahead.

Suddenly a rounded, blood-colored cloud appeared out of the murk at their wake, and came flying towards them like a

giant red-hot cannon-ball. In the red reflection of its light could be seen the grim outline of hills by the shore.

"The *bora!*[61] . . . Cut away, strike the sails! . . . Hew down the masts! . . ." frantically shouted the pilot in a voice not his own.

Evgueny ran to order his men to take in the main topsail. But even while he was giving the order, the thought of the utter impossibility of its execution flashed through his mind. He could hardly believe his eyes when he saw the sailors swarm to the mast at a run. In the darkness of the night, by the flashes of lightning, he watched and saw them reach its top and endeavor to haul in the bulging sail. At that moment a heavy squall struck the *Diana* ahead and athwart her bow, arresting her course and holding her motionless in the boiling cauldron of the waves. Then the wind sent her careening onto her side. The masts dragged the ship down, and she lay on her side. The water came spouting from windward over the deck and, like so many grains of sand shaken out of a box, the men dropped into the sea.

Clutching the poop railings, Evgueny hung over the dark abyss. He felt that ship and crew were doomed. Suddenly, quite close to his ear, he heard the frenzied piping of the boatswain's whistle.

Captain Kolomyitzeff himself had snatched the whistle from the boatswain's hand and was piping away, and, at intervals, yelling in a savage voice which drowned the storm.

"Keep your heads, you sons of the Devil," he shouted, following up his words with still stronger language. "Throw out the life-buoys, you scum! . . . Pay out that rope, you goddamned swine! . . ."

Evgueny saw Lieutenant Stolnikoff throw off his cloak and jump overboard in his black uniform and gold epaulets, and with a life-line tied round his waist.

Soaked through and through and helpless, those who had fallen into sea were one by one dragged out of the water to the sloping deck. It was very difficult to find foothold.

The red cloud of the water-spout overshadowed the ship. It

[61] Name given in the Adriatic to a strong Northerly gale.

burst. The floodgates of the heavens opened with a crash, and rain came like Niagaras. A blue flame enveloped bowsprit, foremast and mainstay, and all three masts crashed into the sea. The ship groaned as though alive and righted herself. It now became easier to stand and continue saving the men. Those of Evgueny's squad who had gone aloft had fallen overboard with the mast. The latter was now beating against the ship's side, threatening to stave her in. The sails were covering and stifling the drowning men. All the officers jumped into the water to save them, but many perished.

Hours passed in this struggle. Evgueny hardly noticed them. Meanwhile, the navigating officer and the pilot, having made their calculations, found that the *Diana* was not far off the coast of Albania.

Lieutenant Dalgren took soundings from the forecastle, and reported to the Captain that the depth of the water had begun to diminish perceptibly.

Old "Bless You" gave the order for two anchors to be dropped, and the *Diana* hove to, bobbing like a cork on the angry waves. The night continued the same, a terrible night. They worked feverishly. The broken masts which were still tossing on the waves alongside the ship, were chopped off. The sea carried them away into roaring darkness. A jury-mast was stepped at last, and rigged out with makeshift yards and sails. The ship had recovered the ability to move.

Meanwhile the thunder was not so loud, nor the lightning so frequent. Instead of the deluge which had been pelting down aslant, a cold and steady rainfall set in. When dawn broke above a line of mountains, the wind had ceased, and only a choppy sea was still running.

At sunrise, a fair wind began to blow off-shore.

The anchors were weighed and, though the sea was still heavy, the *Diana,* thanks to her jury-rig, made the steady headway.

Petty officers reported that twenty-two men had perished. Captain Kolomyitzeff went into his cabin to write up the ship's log and register the damage. The watch went on duty, and the cooks began to prepare dinner.

XVII.

At noon the wind dropped and an ominous calm set in. The sails hung slack on the solitary jury-mast, and the *Diana* rocked on the waves, making no headway. Towards evening the wind began to blow again. A head wind at first, it veered to a side wind and strengthened to a raging gale.

It was clear now that the ship was doomed. Without her masts and sails, she could not possibly struggle with a second storm; and ahead lay the Bay of Avlon, full of stone reefs. The island of Sazino, the only place where she might have found shelter, lay to windward. The corvette drifted, carried ever nearer to the rocky coast. Soundings showed that the depth was steadily diminishing.

The crew and officers were on the upper deck, and all eyes were fixed on the Captain. Beyond the mercy of God, there was no one except old "Bless You" on whom they could pin their faith. Two anchors were dropped one after the other, but both of them, and then the second bower anchor, failed to hold. They only dragged on the sandy bottom. A third, the sheet anchor, was then let go, but the corvette continued to drift toward shore. They were about to lay out the fourth, or kedge anchor, when they struck bottom. The rudder broke. The men on deck were nearly all knocked off their feet.

"Merciful God!"—cried a sailor. "We are done for!"

At that very moment, eight bells struck. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, but work on deck went on without interruption. The strokes of the bell at once calmed the crew, reminding them of duty and service. All waited to hear what the Captain would say.

Kolomyitzeff's face, usually so good-humored and kindly, looked stern. Evgueny, afraid though he was for his own sake, could not but think of what must be going on in that soul that saw all he had loved with a superhuman love go to rack and ruin before his very eyes. Evgueny knew how dear every bit of cordage, every inch of wood on the *Diana* were to the

old captain. He knew how proud he had been of his ship when setting out on this cruise from the roadstead of Cronstadt, and when his many friends and acquaintances had come in sailing-boats and rowing-boats to bid him Godspeed. Evgueny had been in charge of the guard. When the flag had been hauled down for the first time at sunset that day, and the band had played *How glorious is God in Zion,* and when he himself had given the word to present arms, he had seen big tears of happiness rolling down old "Bless You's" ruddy face.

A huge wave came surging on and laid the *Diana* on her side. It lifted her up on its crest, only to dash her once more against the bottom. The timbers of the ship's sides cracked, and the hold began to fill with water. More waves swept on, and down went the ship again. Creaking and moaning as though alive, the vessel cried out that she did not want to die.

The captain summoned the officers for a council. Within his cabin one noticed the extreme list of the ship. All the furniture had been turned upside down and shattered. Fragments of a large mirror littered the floor. Vsevolod Stepanovitch looked at them, and his pale face grew ashen grey.

Lieutenants Gangart, Sorokin, Sopronoff and Dalgren sat down on the captain's berth with their legs crossed under them. Evgueny and Stolnikoff remained standing near the door. The cabin was full. The lamp which hung on a brass ring from the ceiling, burnt with a red smoky flame, throwing black shadows on the white walls of the cabin. Every time the floor sank, they involuntarily braced themselves to meet the shock as the hull hit bottom.

"Well, gentlemen," said Vsevolod Stepanovitch, "what shall we do?"

There was no answer. It was clear that the hour of their doom had come.

The ship reared up once more, only to sink again. The broken glass went rattling into one corner.

"We must save the men, that, bless you, is what we must do," said the Captain. "We cannot hope to save the ship. It is I who have to answer for her. But the crew must be saved.

That's what I consider to be my duty before God and before my Sovereign."

He stopped short.

Lieutenant Gangart, the senior officer, then spoke up.

"Shouldn't we try, Vsevolod Stepanovitch, to throw overboard all heavy weights—carronades, ammunition, spare rigging and so on," he suggested, pressing his point earnestly and in a business-like tone. "Thus we might lighten the ship and manage to set her afloat again."

"No, Serguei Sergueevitch," said the captain with a wave of his hand. "No, bless you, we cannot save the ship in that way. But the crew must be got ashore."

He stopped for a moment, searching the faces of his officers with strange, empty eyes. Then, turning to Gangart, he said:

"All right. . . . Try to jettison everything. Take command. . . . I will stay here meanwhile."

When all had left the cabin, Captain Kolomyitzeff remained alone at his desk. In front of him lay the ship's log-book in heavy binding. Its pages of rough grey paper were covered with lines in his straight, old-fashioned handwriting in rusty ink. The captain turned over the pages. The history of the ship had been set down here by him day by day, since she had first put to sea. The ordeal she had gone through in the last two days was described. Now he was going to enter the last moments of the *Diana*. He took up a pen and began to write.

Other noises were now added to the confusion: the heavy carronades were being thrown overboard from the ports.

Every time he heard the oddly sounding splash of the waves receiving their prey, Vsevolod Stepanovitch's shoulders shook and his features twitched painfully. Like threads unwinding from rapidly revolving spools, his thoughts wove themselves into a ribbon which finally lost itself in space.

He had been given charge of the *Diana* when, as yet without masts or armament, she had been on the stocks of the Admiralty yard in St. Petersburg. He had seen the heavy shores of the ship removed in the presence of the Emperor and his Court, with the Minister of Marine, the Marquis de Traversé, also present, as well as those famous veterans, Field-Marshals

Count Kamensky and Prince Prozorovsky. The *Diana* had suddenly become infused with life. With the flag of St. Andrew flying from her stern, she had glided, slowly at first, but soon gathering speed, down the slipway, proudly cutting the dark waters of the Neva to the sounds of a thundering salute from other ships and the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. He had also seen this newly-born member of the Russian Fleet equipped with rigging and with ordnance. With his name as that of her first captain, she had been entered in the registers of the Fleet.

Thirty years of unblemished service, of cruising, of fighting the Turks and the Swedes, had won him this beautiful ship. He remembered the happy face of his daughter Oletchka[62] when the *Diana,* in all the snowy whiteness of her sails, with her flags fluttering in the wind and with her crew manning shrouds and yards, beautiful as a happy young bride, had passed the spot where his daughter's boat was bobbing up and down on the waves of the gulf. Music had been playing then, his crew had been cheering, and the hurrahs of those who had come to bid him Godspeed had sent him off on his voyage. His ship and his Oletchka—they were all he loved in the world. But his service to the Emperor and his duty stood highest. And now his ship was doomed. He was the captain of a foundering wreck. Much good, indeed, it would do him later on to try and prove that the storm had been too heavy to allow of saving the ship. If, when the first storm had been coming on, he had at once sought shelter and safety near the Italian shore; if he had remained longer at Curzola. . . . The pages of the logbook gave a clear and cheerless answer to all these "ifs." But would this answer be as clear to others then, as it was to him now?

"Yes, all this is quite true," thought Vsevolod Stepanovitch as he read the account of what had happened, day by day and hour by hour. "But how shall I be able to look into the eyes of the Marquis de Traversé?"

"Take care of the corvette, Kolomyitzeff," the Emperor had said, when receiving him in audience for the last time before

[62] Diminutive for "Olga."

the cruise. "Take care of her and don't forget that by taking care of her you are guarding Russia's glory."

Vsevolod Stepanovitch gave no thought to what was in store for him just now, nor did he give heed to the fact that he was near a coast inhabited by savage Albanians, under Turkish rule; that death might be lurking on that coast. It was of St. Petersburg he thought: the Admiralty where he would be tried and would have to clear himself of blame for loss of his ship. Guns, kegs of gunpowder, cases of cannon-balls, were going overboard that very minute, carrying to the bottom hundreds of thousands of Russian rubles which had been carefully set by and then spent on building this ship. The old Captain had been careful all his life to save every *doit* [68] of Crown property he could, and the thought of this waste was as painful as though he were being cut to pieces with knives.

"Death is better than dishonor," he thought, reaching for a heavy pistol which hung on the wall. "O Lord forgive me and have mercy on my soul!"

At that moment came a heavy splash, unlike any of the noises heard so far. He recognized it at once. The ship's jolly-boat had been lowered.

Hurriedly, with trembling hands, Kolomyitzeff opened the chest of drawers and took out his new full-dress, gold-embroidered uniform. He changed into it, and buckled on his dirk. Then, putting on his new gold-cockaded hat, he opened the door of his cabin and hurried out on deck.

Astern the jolly-boat was tossing on the mountainous waves. It had already been manned, and now Lieutenant Gangart was being helped into it. Shipping the end of a hawser, the boat shoved off and disappeared into the darkness, uncoiling the hawser on deck. Steadily it was paid out, and many a minute passed before it tautened, and those on deck understood that the boat had reached land and the hawser had been made fast to some object ashore.

Then the crew began to be sent ashore by means of the hawser, going according to their rank, all the lower ratings going first. Vsevolod Stepanovitch himself stood on deck watch-

[68] A Dutch coin worth about one quarter of a cent.

ing his men get into the water. One by one they ran up to the side, and, making the sign of the cross, took hold of the hawser and jumped into the sea, vanishing into the darkness. They went with what they stood up in, and none took any of his belongings.

"So long, your Honor," a man would say. "God grant, we'll meet on land."

Gordienko, a big bearded sailor, came up with a bundle.

"May I trouble you, your Honor," he said, "to hand me this bundle carefully when I jump into the water and swim up to the side of the ship?"

"But what is it?" Kolomyitzeff asked, taking the bundle from him and feeling that something was moving inside.

"It is Poushok, your Honor. Why should he lose his life?"

"But what will you do with him when we move on, ashore?"

"I'll manage to keep him alive somehow."

"But you will never reach shore with him."

"God is merciful, your Honor. With one hand I'll hold on to the hawser, and I'll keep him above water with the other to prevent him from drowning. He has had quite enough of it as it is, poor little beast."

Bending over the ship's side, the Captain waited for the sailor to reappear on the surface, and at last saw a white face and then a hand emerging and catching hold of the slippery rope.

"Gently, your Honor; don't drop him."

Strange as it may appear, the solicitude of this common sailor for the ship's cat dissipated the dark thoughts which had been clouding Vsevolod Stepanovitch's mind, as though it had suddenly proved to him the value of life, be it even for the most trivial of animals.

The crew and all the officers had left the ship; old "Bless You" was the last to jump from what was left of her into the sea. He was caught up by a wave and all but carried away from the hawser, but he swam up to it, caught it with both hands, and fought his way through the waves to the shore.

By the time all those who had got ashore had at last assembled, it was two o'clock in the morning. The men had

already had time to go to the nearest forest and bring back some wood, and soon several fires were going. The crew gathered round them and told one another how they had been saved. Four sailors were missing; those who had seen them drown told the others how some huge waves had carried them away from the hawser, nobody being able to come to their help.

Gordienko sat quite close to one of the piles of wood, warming his bare feet at the fire. At his side, drying on Gordienko's uniform and attracting the attention of all, lay Poushok, that Cronstadt thoroughbred.

At length, tired out and wet, after having warmed themselves as best they could, they all fell asleep from exhaustion. Dawn was breaking when they awoke. A dull rumbling came from the sea; the waves kept beating against the rocks, receding, hissing with foam. Ragged clouds hung low over the shore. The sea was empty and vast.

XVIII.

When Evgueny opened his eyes he was lying on the ground near the cold embers of a fire. Every bone in his body ached from the cold. His uniform had dried, but his underclothes were still damp and clinging. Close by he saw Stolnikoff, naked to the waist, who had wrung out his shirt and was trying to smooth it out on the stones. He had stretched out his uniform on some sticks stuck into the ground. The sailors kept coming and going, and the sound of their voices filled the air. Steam was rising from kettles hanging over a fire that had been freshly lit.

After the comfort of his warm cabin aboard ship, this camping out in the open among the rocks appeared profoundly distasteful. Evgueny made a wry face and looked about him.

The winter sun showed feebly in the sky. The sea was a cold violet color. The dragging and shifting of the shingle on the beach sounded endlessly. High and forbidding vertical cliffs thrust forward from the coast.

At the spot where the ship's company had landed, mountain-ranges opened to form a stony valley into which the wind, which was still raging above, penetrated only in feeble gusts, making dry oak and hawthorn leaves whisper. Slatey rocks glistened in the sunlight. Everything on land was as bare as on the sea.

"Fate is playing with me like a wave with a chip of wood," Evgueny mused. "At first it amused itself by throwing me into Germaine's arms, showing me the splendor of the new French Empire . . . and only to madden me, to tear me away like a slave, to cast me up in the end, like refuse, on this God-forsaken coast."

Old "Bless You" and Lieutenant Gangart had been busy. The ship's log was drying in the sun, turning over its leaves in the wind, as though eager to tell the short history of the *Diana.* A large sea chart, carefully weighed down with stones at its corners, had also been spread out to dry. A compass and sextant, both in perfect order, lay beside it. Their sight made Evgueny smile involuntarily.

"I am sure that old 'Bless You' will take his log and his instruments along when he makes the port of Heaven, so as to prove to God Almighty that he has done his duty and has done it in full accordance with service regulations. Gordienko over there takes care of his cat, and he too, probably thinks he does it because it is his duty."

Gordienko was sitting not far away. He had taken off his uniform and had spread it over the cat. With some sacking and some grass he had made a bed for him, and now Poushok was asleep. Only his ears and white whiskers could be seen sticking out from under the black cloth of the uniform.

The men were looking on and laughing.

"I tell you what, lads, he'd rather die of cold in this wind than let down his cat," said one fellow with conviction in his voice. "He is as heroic a sailor as they make them."

Gordienko smiled all over his broad, bearded face.

"I said that Poushok would go back to Cronstadt one day, and so he shall! I promised Olga Vsevolodovna, the Captain's daughter, I'd look after him; and so I shall."

"But how are you going to keep him alive, clever lad that you are? You don't know but that we may die of hunger ourselves!"

"And what do you think we have God for? He won't let us starve, and he won't let the cat starve either!"

"Why am I not like that man?" thought Evgueny, "I've always been my mother's spoilt darling. It's always myself I think of first. I have been used to it all my life. Whatever I wanted, I had to have. So it has always been: myself first and last. That's the right way to look at things. What else is the world then, but my own self?"

His thoughts went round and round, growing out of one another, until they brought him again to one of his usual fits of brooding. What was he going to do now, this smart officer of the Russian navy,—an unshaven, hungry, and shivering wretch, lying with chattering teeth on the coast of a country at war with his own?

Three men, leading their horses,—lean, shaggy, hollow-flanked animals,—came walking down the mountain slope. They wore red tasselled fezzes, torn red jackets and soiled pleated kilts. Curved swords hung from their belts, and very long firelocks behind their shoulders. The butt-ends of these guns were made of dark walnut; they were narrow and inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The men's faces were dark and sunburnt; great drooping moustaches lent them a fierce look.

When they had come near the camp, one of them remained with the horses while the other two approached the Russians. The sailors looked at them, some with mere curiosity, some with fear, and others with hope.

"They are human beings. And where there are people there must also be food."

Touching their foreheads with their palms in sign of peaceful intent, the two men came up to where the officers were standing. They looked with greedy eyes at their dirks, at the gold embroidery, and the brass buttons of their uniforms. Apparently they loved metal that glittered.

"Birr capitana! . . . Birr capitana! . . . Kafanae. . . . Corfu. . . . Corfu!" they said, waving their hands and pointing somewhere into the distance.

"They probably want me," said Kolomyitzeff.

His face was pale, but it looked calm. "Go where you can and die where you must," seemed to be written there.

"I shall go. I may be able to come to some arrangement with them."

"*Birr-capitana*—that's me," he said, coming forward.

The sailors came thronging round him.

"We can't let you go, your Honor. What shall we do without you?"

"I shall try to get food for you. There must be someone in authority hereabouts."

"But just look at their mugs, your Honor. They are regular bandits! Gallows-birds, that's what they are, and no doubt about it."

"At least you ought to take one of us with you. . . . Ivan Sonin here, or Brykin."

"You must go with the Captain, Brykin! Don't you try to shirk it."

"He hails from Kostroma, your Honor. He has tackled bears single-handed. Bandits don't mean a thing to him. He can manage them with one finger. He'll get even with them all right."

"Sure I'll go," said Brykin readily, getting into the sleeves of his greatcoat, which was still stiff from the water. "No need to worry about these two."

The Captain, with Sonin and Brykin, followed the bandits into the hills.

Towards evening it had become fairly certain that they were prisoners.

Fifty Albanians came down from the hills towards the seashore, taking up posts as sentinels round the sailors' bivouac. They brought, however, some wheat cakes, some goat's-milk cheese and some lard, which were shared out to the ship's com-

pany. Though not enough for a square meal, it served to keep them alive.

Evgueny watched Stolnikoff eat his cake with care, so as not to lose a single crumb. The sailors had contrived to construct, a sort of shelter for the young officers out of some sodden sea-weed. Evgueny eyed it with loathing. One of the reasons why he had chosen the navy to serve in was its cleanliness. He loved cleanliness, he had been brought up to love it at home, and had been trained to it at the Naval Corps "So much for cleanliness," he thought now. He lay down with disgust on the sea-weed smelling of slime and tang, covered himself with his uniform, and went to sleep with the heavy sleep of a man who has lost everything.

He woke at dawn. A detachment of Turkish infantry, five hundred strong, came down from the hills. They had brought with them a Greek who spoke French. Their chief produced a written order which the Greek translated into French and by which the Turkish military authorities declared them prisoners of war, and the officers were ordered to give up their swords.

But the Turks did not stop at that. The officers were ordered to give up their uniforms and hats, which were handed back to them only after the gold embroidery and buttons had been ripped off and the epaulets removed. There was nothing for it but to sew on chips of wood instead of the buttons, and when, having done this, they put on their uniforms and looked at one another, they understood all that it meant. It meant—captivity.

The next day they were marched off to the mountains. Vsevolod Stepanovitch, Sonin and Brykin joined them at the first village they passed. Old "Bless You" had also had his epaulets removed and the gold and buttons ripped off his coat; and in his marred uniform, with the bristly stubble of his unshaven beard covering cheeks and chin, he looked sullen and depressed. He walked in front of his detachment with uneven, stumbling steps and did not offer to speak. Once only did he turn to his second in command, saying in a loud, indignant voice:

"There yet exists such a thing as Europe, doesn't there?

International law and justice are also things that do exist. All countries will have to intercede for us. We cannot be treated as prisoners of war, not having been taken in battle. They have been muddling things up here; and Europe is bound to make them understand. They will yet have to answer for our humiliation."

Gangart offered no remark, neither did any other officer except Stolnikoff. He said in a low voice:

"If only God does not forsake us. As to men. . . ."

He waved his hand helplessly.

XIX.

"ALL these men believe in God. Yet God has forsaken them and suffers them to perish," thought Evgueny marching with his fellow-prisoners. "They all are righteous men. I alone am a sinner, because of the thoughts which have come crowding into my head ever since those days in Paris. And yet I see that the same reward is meted out to the righteous as to the sinner."

A silent and hungry crowd, the "righteous" plodded along. Gordienko, who looked thin and emaciated, yet marched with a firm step, carrying Poushok in a sack. At every halt where they stopped for the night, he shared his scanty ration with the cat, obstinately intent on his purpose.

"I said I would bring him back to Cronstadt, and so I shall," he kept saying.

He firmly believed he would be back in Cronstadt one day.

Evgueny had stopped believing it a long time before. For over a month they had been driven like cattle along the mountain roads. When the prisoners passed through a village, women, old and young, came running after them, breaking the ranks of their escort, to spit into the face of the sailors. Children threw sticks and stones at them.

"Hou-hou. . . . Ourouss! . . . Moskov! . . . Kiafir! . . . Unclean dogs!"

From some words they had overheard on their march, and

the meaning of which they had guessed rather than understood, the prisoners had found out that things were not going well for the Turks in the war, whence this hatred of the vanquished for their victors.

The people in the streets saw these very same victors pass by: barefoot, unshaven, dirty, hungry and tattered wretches, and it was sweet to spit and throw lumps of mud at them.

"Here we are on the march into the unknown," ruminated Evgueny. "But is there anything known to man he can consider certain knowledge? When exactly, though, was it this campaign into the unknown began? Was it at that moment when each of us came to the world, and his first cry was audible in the room he was born? Or was it when the *Diana,* a beautiful bride in the wealth of her white sails, put out from Cronstadt to be wedded to the sea?"

Evgueny glanced at Stolnikoff, who was marching beside him.

There was nothing left at all of his former good looks, and no one would have now recognized in him the tall youth with rounded cheeks covered with tender down, with red laughing lips, who looked so slim and well knit in his gold-embroidered uniform. Thin, with stooping shoulders, a brown stubble of beard and a bristly moustache, unkempt and dirty, his coat torn and soiled and burnt in places,—he looked quite old. His clear, round grey eyes alone looked young, calm and undaunted.

"You do look nice!" said Evgueny, with a kind of hostility he could not very well understand himself. "What if your fiancée, our Captain's fair daughter Oletchka, saw you now?"

Stolnikoff stroked his rough shock of hair and his bristly chin with his hard, black, long uncared-for hand, and suddenly smiled, a calm and well assured smile.

"You don't know Oletchka, Evgueny," he said. "You don't know her at all. I shouldn't like to appear before her looking as I do just now, of course. But if she did see me, she would only love me the better for it. She would be full of pity for me, and when Oletchka pities someone she loves him doubly. I certainly do not look like a gentleman just now, but that could easily be put right. I should only have to have a bath

and go to the barber's to have my beard shaved off and my hair cut and trimmed. . . . As to being thin, why, Oletchka would feed me up and make me grow quite fat. . . . Don't judge Oletchka. Wait till you meet her and then you will know what kind of a girl she is. And you will understand what love is. Wait till we get back."

"We shall never get back. Do you hear? Never."

Evgueny's face grew hard, and just then he passionately wished to kill all hope in Stolnikoff's heart. Stolnikoff looked at him sadly with his round grey eyes, like a sparrow that has been hit.

"Why do you talk like that, Evgueny?" he said in a low voice. "God is merciful."

"God? There is no God. If God existed, would people perish like this? People perish every day, every hour, in pain and torture. God is love and charity, they say. Yet where are that love and charity among men? They deride one another, they rejoice at the sufferings of their neighbor. They hate one another. The tortures of death, war, famine and outrage, that's what God's world contains. A beautiful thing indeed!"

"But it is beautiful," Stolnikoff said with conviction. "Look around. Spring is coming. Look at the almond trees in bloom. The green grass is shooting through the red clay out of the earth. Look into the distance. . . . Do you see that blue, transparent mist curling between the mountains? The sea is there. How soft and tender everything is! Our turn will come to be happy and rejoice once more. Think of all the towns we have passed. . . . Berat, Bitol, Miri, Rhodost, Selivria. Constantinople cannot be far away. And there are Europeans there. They will intercede for us, we will obtain justice. God will help us."

"I tell you there is no God."

"Don't talk like that, Evgueny; it is a sin. God is everywhere. He is near us. He hears your words. We are unfortunate just now, but even in misfortune, God sends a promise of joy. We need only notice and feel it. The sun is as warm as in spring. Sweet scents are wafted from the fields by the wind. Is that not a joy? We are approaching Constantinople.

Have you noticed that we have been walking on a good, stone-paved road for several days back? And have you noticed the marble fountains, with brass taps and silver ladles, in the towns we have passed? A relic of Byzantium! It is a joy to see them and admire them. And it is a joy to think that we shall soon enter Constantinople—the dream of every Russian heart."

"Nice dream, indeed, to enter it as prisoners."

"You are always harping on the same string! We shall enter it as prisoners, and leave it as free men. We shall be sent thence to Odessa, and leave there on horseback for Petersburg. . . . And then will come Cronstadt. . . ."

"I know, I know, you need not go on," cried Evgueny with sudden wrath. "And then, again . . . a corvette, her sails and cordage. . . . The boatswain's whistle and the blows of the cat on the sailor's backs. . . . And so on without end!"

Stolnikoff was silent, not wishing to irritate his friend.

For some time past the road had been ascending steadily. Planted with tamarisks and poplars, it led through villages and green fields and flourishing gardens. The view was cut off by the continual upward grade. The greenish-red table-land seemed to thrust into the dark-blue sky. But when the summit of the divide was reached, even those who were tired to the point of utter apathy forgot their weariness for the time at sight of the marvellous scene which lay before them. Enclosed in the wide curve of the straits that stretched away into purple haze between precipitous banks, a brilliant town lay outspread. An azure bay cut into the shore like a twisting horn. On hills which almost circled it, white houses, red roofs, and the slender needles of minarets mingled in recurring patterns. Farther on, the scattered houses of the outskirts were like a flock of sheep against the soft green. There were outlying monasteries and mosques, surrounded by rings of black cypresses. Golden crescents on towers and cupolas glittered; the domes were lapis lazuli. The water-front was festooned with trailing scarves of white foam. The deeper waters were violet, which intensified the tawny yellows and orange of innumerable sails. One might have thought that a great bagful of precious stones had been emptied on the shore. Beyond, on the Sea of

Marmora, flat, yellow-white islands, grown over with gardens, floated like baskets of flowers.

A dull and distant noise came from the town, and a faint aroma of frankincense, vanilla, and cypress, like whiffs of an odalisque's perfume.

Nations had fought each other for centuries for this city, this gem, this town of dream and legends, with a story blood-stained and bright as itself.

The prisoners gazed down upon it. A vague hope stirred in their hearts.

At a short distance from its gates, they were bidden to halt. The chief of their escort went galloping into the town. Pending his return the prisoners were marched off the road to a grove of cypresses, where they sat down to rest among the white marble tombstones of a Musulman cemetery. A caravan of camels passed slowly on the road with a tinkle of bells; a donkey with heavy baskets on his back came trudging along. Turkish peasants passed driving a flock of sheep. Black-veiled women, carrying earthenware jugs on their heads or big round loaves of bread on their shoulders, came and went. Passing the prisoners, they stopped to look at the Russians through the slits of their *yashmaks* and then went on their way swaying their strong, supple hips. The white turbans of the Turks, their red and blue jackets and variegated trousers, the gold-woven shawls of the women, their ear-rings and necklaces of gay beads, glistened and glittered in the rays of the sun. It was all very foreign and odd. The sun itself seemed to be another sun, not the one which shone in Cronstadt.

It was early spring, but the air was already quite warm. The noisy town was seething with life. The sounds of a flute could be heard from somewhere, trumpets were blaring and a drum was beating heavily. Workmen unloading barges were shouting shrilly.

The officer came galloping back. His gray Turkish horse was wet with sweat. The metal discs on its breast-plate tinkled. He dismounted slowly, as a self-respecting Turk should, and went up to the Russian officers. He told them that if any of them had money hidden away in their clothes, they should

give it to him for safe-keeping. He would return it to its owners later on. Otherwise, if the janizaries who were coming to take charge of the prisoners searched them and found any money, it would be simply taken away and they would be bastinadoed as well.

Some of the officers gave up their money. Others were silent, mistrusting the honesty of the *Aga*.[64]

Several hours went by. The prisoners were hungry and tired out with expectation. At last a body of white-clad janizaries arrived. They took charge of the prisoners, arranging them in couples. A janizary, with a naked dagger in his right hand and holding his charge by the scruff of his neck with the left, placed himself beside each of the captives, and in this inauspicious way the procession moved towards the town. When, on passing the gates, they entered a crowded and noisy street, a yelling mob came closing in upon them from all sides. The women raged and shewed their fury worst of all. They broke the ranks of the prisoners, throwing back their black veils in order to see better. Their faces were distorted with malevolence, and both old faces and young were equally terrible. They spat into the prisoners' faces and beat them on the head with sticks. Children ran yelling by the side of the procession. Shaggy dogs barked from gateways.

It seemed as though the town would never end. Descending into small, narrow streets and mingling with the crowd, they emerged again into large squares. Goods laid out for sale could be seen through the open shop-windows. The smell of burnt mutton fat and of coffee came from open taverns, which were full of people. Some of the customers remained seated, but others rushed towards the prisoners, and eased their minds by calling them dogs and infidels.

The prisoners marched on in silence. That hope which had been born in their hearts had vanished. It was evident now that this wonderful town had nothing to offer them but evil.

[64] Officer in command.

High pillars flanking heavy gates in an archway, the only gap in an otherwise unbroken front of massive, windowless walls, caught the eyes of the captives when the procession, at last, came to a halt. With a long, complaining screech, the gates swung open and the prisoners stepped into a spacious rectangular courtyard.

At the farthest end of the latter stood a large-windowed building with a wide, balustraded terrace of white marble. Carpets were laid on the terrace, and puffy, bright-colored cushions lay scattered about.

The sun was sinking to the west. Deep blue shadows were cast by the house. Its carpeted marble steps were vividly lit by the slanting rays.

On either side the yard was packed with a dense crowd, and the chattering drone of their voices made Evgueny's head hum until he seemed to hear one solitary, endlessly drawn-out "Aa-aaa-aaaa" ring in his ears.

Right in front of the steps, some men clad in white were sitting on the ground in a row, guarded by janizaries with naked scimitars. The Russian prisoners were marshaled into line behind these men who sat on the ground. Officers were placed to the right, according to rank, and the crew were posted on their left. The men stood holding small sacks with their greatcoats. Poushok moved in Gordienko's sack.

Evgueny counted the men who were sitting on the ground. They were exactly fifty. He noticed one of them cross himself. Apparently they also were Christians taken prisoner. Lieutenant Gangart, who had a smattering of Serbian, asked in a low voice who they were and what this place was.

Looking up with a pale face, a man who was sitting a step away from him answered:

"This is the Grand Vizier's palace, and we are Serbian prisoners. We have already been waiting over two days and two nights for our fate to be decided."

The sun was setting now. The long gray-white row of Serbian prisoners and the marble terrace were pallid in its light. A drum began to beat loudly behind the building and a wailing

blast of trumpets blared out. The tall doors leading to the terrace opened wide. Loud cheers of acclamation rose and fell from the crowd of spectators.

Again the single, drawn-out: "Aa-aaa-aaa" resounded in Evgueny's ears. Evgueny looked straight in front of him, and felt as though all this were some strange dream.

A stout Turk, with a gold feather in his turban and a richly embroidered jacket, appeared on the terrace, followed by a score of ornately dressed Turks and some French officers with their ladies. The gold epaulets and embroideries of their uniforms glittered; bright plumes waved above the tricolor cockades in their hats. The ladies were all young and handsome looking. They wore light Paris gowns with long trains, straw hats trimmed with curly ostrich feathers and ribbons, and bright colored shawls; they had opened their sunshades to protect themselves from the sun, and the variegated parasols and the bright patches of color in their toilettes looked like gay flowers relieving the sumptuousness of the uniforms and Turkish kaftans. They were gaily chatting with the men, and their delicate faces wore a smile.

Evgueny's eyes had fixed themselves so attentively on this group of French officers and their ladies, that he did not even notice what was going on among the Serbians. A peculiar sound, dull, yet clearly distinct, suddenly struck his ear and attracted his attention. It was as though a cabbage-head had been flung violently to the ground.

Evgueny glanced in the direction whence the sound had come.

A white head with a mop of black hair and a black moustache was rolling on the sand, leaving a track of blood behind it. The beheaded body lay flat on the ground, and dark blood poured from it, as from a bottle, onto the sand. Beside it, a janizary was wiping the curved blade of his scimitar with the skirt of his coat. Another janizary had seized the next Serbian by the hair and was preparing to strike.

A strong chopping blow was heard. Another head fell, struck the ground, and rolled along the sand.

"Lord have mercy . . ." came in a loud whisper from one of the sailors.

Evgueny turned his eyes again to the terrace. A slender Frenchwoman was saying something with a smile to an officer. Her sunshade and her hat covered the upper part of her face. Her full red lips and delicately chiseled chin alone were visible. "And that woman can smile!"—thought Evgueny. He turned his eyes away from the terrace and looked at the sailors. They stood with drooping heads. Sturdy Brykin covered his eyes and crossed himself at every swing of a scimitar. Little Sergueveff stood whispering something with bloodless lips. Gordienko had opened his sack and was stroking his cat's head. He was probably taking silent leave of Poushok.

The execution went on apace. Head went rolling after head, then stopped dead a few paces away from the bodies which, odd-looking, ungainly trunks now, lay sprawling on the ground. The cloying, sweetish smell of human blood grew stronger. Evgueny had only just begun to realize that, after the Serbians, it would be their turn. But this thought begot no other and his head was strangely empty, void of prayer or recollections. He mechanically counted the bodies of those who had been executed. There were fifty Serbians. Then old "Bless You" would die, and Gangart, Sorokin, Sopronoff. Dalgren would follow. . . . And then it would be his own turn. After him, Stolnikoff's. He would not be there to see Stolnikoff die. Fifty-one, fifty-two, fifty-three. . . . He was to be number fifty-six.

Thirty heads had fallen with the same dull, monotonous, terrible thud, rolling away on the ground. Evgueny was beginning to get used to the sound now, and did no more than shudder when he heard that chopping blow of the scimitar on the living white neck, which preceded the thud.

Fifty. . . .

He felt his legs grow limp. He saw dark, blurred spots dancing before his eyes. Every minute he believed he was going to faint. There was a death-like silence everywhere. Nobody stirred.

Suddenly Evgueny began to pray. It was a confused and

disconnected prayer he kept saying in his mind. He prayed yet waited for the inevitable end. He was beyond noticing anything.

"Save me, O Lord!" he repeated mentally over and over, yet through these words, like the maddening strokes of a hammer, the word: "Now!—now!—now!" beat in his head.

XX.

EVGUENY was past taking things in with his eye, and what he was able to comprehend did not amount to much. He did not actually lose his senses, but they had become numb. He must have been marched away by the janizaries with the others. Later on it vaguely came back to him. He seemed to remember a street descending steeply, which had steps like those of a staircase, and also the cries and the threats of a crowd, which had sounded as though coming from far away, although the stones and lumps of mud thrown at them had hit him more than once.

His faculties only came back after he and his companions had been taken across the bay to Galata.

A row of tall, gloomy buildings, apparently warehouses, faced the edge of a quay. Green water splashed, washing the stone jetty. The place was deserted. Only dogs were wandering about, and Turkish sentinels stood motionless on watch at the closed iron gates.

The sun had set. The shadows had gone. A warm afterglow was burning itself out behind the mountains. The captives were brought into a yard, where they were left by the guard. Presently, with a clanking of chains, the inmates of the prison came crowding around them. The prisoners were chained in couples, and it was the clanking of their chains which brought Evgueny's senses back.

It looked as though people from all around the Mediterranean coast had been assembled in that yard. A giant Turk, naked to the waist, with a powerful, shining torso that seemed

to be made of red copper, moved about dragging a small, lean, dark faced Greek after him on his chain. Albanians, Bulgarians, Serbians, Italians, and with them fair complexioned and bearded Russian soldiers in torn, buttonless uniforms, prisoners from the Moldavian Army of General Kamensky, surrounded the sailors.

The Russians recognized their countrymen at once from afar. With eyes shining with joy at hearing the sound of their native language, they pressed through the crowd and overwhelmed the sailors with questions. The Turks and Wallachians chained to them listened indifferently to what was being said in a language they did not know.

A lame Turk in a blue jacket and wide trousers kept coming and going in the crowd, giving orders for the chaining of the prisoners. Armenian blacksmiths appeared on the scene, and their hammers began to strike on the iron of the shackles.

Mellow twilight was descending upon the yard. Behind the barn, the amethyst of near-by hills, low and rounded, melted into the horizon's transparent azure, and soon their tops became edged with silver. The moon rose. Strangely at variance with this serene distant beauty, the sound of human voices grated harshly on the ear.

"I say, mate," said Gordienko in a casual voice, turning to a little infantryman chained to a lean Italian. "Hold my cat for me, will you? I am to have my irons put on, you see, so I'm afraid he might get scared and try to run away."

"What have you got that animal for?"

"It's not an animal, if you please, it's a thoroughbred Cronstadt tom-cat, mate. He has got here on the ship *Diana* from Cronstadt, and back to Cronstadt he'll go—that's flat!"

"A fine cat—finest tom I've ever set eyes on."

Gordienko was being chained to Stolnikoff, and in the meanwhile, Evgueny asked the little infrantryman to tell him where they were.

"It's a hard-labor prison, that's simply what it is, your Honor," said the man, recognising the officer in Evgueny in spite of his rags. "We fellows have been here for over five months already, expiating our sins. Beware of that lame one," he said,

lowering his voice. "That's Ahmed. He is a Turk, but he knows Russian. He has been a prisoner of war in Russia, and he has told us himself how well he was treated there. But He even sets his little son, a boy of six, at us. When we go out to work, that urchin comes running along to throw sticks and stones at us."

"How do you live here?"

"It's not much we get, yet somehow we manage, and our father the Tzar doesn't forget us even here. It is by his Imperial order we get an allowance for bettering our food from the Danish minister, General Giebsch, I think, his name is. The Greek Patriarch also sends us a trifle now and then. There are kind people everywhere, your Honor. The sun shines even in prison. We keep alive all right, but it is hard to be chained together with another chap. We are damned tired of each other. Well, let's move on, moussiou," he said, pulling the Italian by his chain. "I must get the cat back to his master."

Evgueny was chained to the seaman Islamoff, a quiet Tartar, a carpenter and glazier by trade, and they both turned to the dark doorway of the barn, where shouts were being raised for prisoners to line up for evening roll-call.

Evgueny often wondered how it was possible he could ever endure such a life. Had he been alone, he would certainly have gone under, but, being led in company with the others, this existence, unnatural and terrible though it was, somehow got accepted and became a kind of routine.

In the day-time they went, under escort, to work in town. They unloaded barges, carried heavy cases and barrels and placed them on trolleys. Sometimes Evgueny worked alone with Islamoff, and sometimes Stolnikoff and Gordienko would be told off to join them. They returned to the court-yard at sunset, ate their scanty supper and, when the sun had disappeared behind the mountains, were locked up in the barn.

During the night they lay in a foul smelling and stifling atmosphere, waiting for the dawn, when they would be let out

to breathe fresh air again and sent to work, only to wait as anxiously all day for the night to fall, when the jeering of the Turks and heavy work and blows of sticks and whips would cease. Being chained to another and having to depend on his movements for one's own, was what depressed the prisoners most. Zakhartchouk, a soldier, died and lay, a dried up and stinking corpse, terrible to look at, with the sailor Bernikoff chained to him for forty-eight hours, before some Turkish officials arrived for the post-mortem. They beat the dead soldier on the stomach with sticks, thrust a stick into his mouth and, satisfied at last there was no more life in the body, rid Bernikoff of his dead yoke-mate and threw the body into the bay. Russian prisoners of war, sailors, soldiers and officers mingled with four hundred Turks and Levantines, among whom were thirty pirates from the crew of the corsair Lambro-Caccioni, who had received life sentences for their robberies. Here all were equal. Prison, and common wants and sufferings placed all on a level, rich men and poor, men of quality and men of the people, honest men and rogues. They slept just where they lay down, with a log of wood for a pillow. When they were allowed to wash their linen, the prisoners took off their shirts and rinsed them, and then sat naked, waiting for them to dry.

When the red glow of the sun setting beyond the hills lit up the sky behind the town, the prisoners were herded like a drove of cattle to the prison barn and counted by yokes, as it were, as they were let in. This usually took some time. The guards often made mistakes and whenever this happened all were driven out again into the courtyard and counted anew. The gates of the barn were chained for the night, and sentinels were set everywhere. Once an hour the drum of the watch would be heard beating and the sentinels outside inquiring of those within:

"All's right inside?"

"Inshallah! . . . God willing!"—would come the answer.

On being awakened by the beating of the drum, Evgueny could seldom go to sleep again. With his heart beating violently he would lie there and wait with a painful, incomprehensible

sort of anxiety for that drum to beat again and for the guttural "Inshallah" to sound once more, as though coming from the gates of Hell.

The air in the barn would become more and more stifling. All around, nothing but the snores and moans and outcries of men raving in their sleep. The blood would beat at Evgueny's temples, and for the hundredth time he would wonder why men had been forced into such dreadful surroundings, and why they did not throw themselves into the sea in a crowd or beat their heads against the stone walls.

Hope. . . . All these people kept obstinately living on the hope that their present troubles were bound to come to an end. Many and many a time Evgueny was made to listen to Stolnikoff's day-dreamings about being back in Cronstadt with his Oletchka, of telling her how he had fared, of her tears of sympathy for the sufferings he had undergone, and her tears of joy because, thank God, all that belonged to the past. "When we get home . . ." Stolnikoff used to say—"the Lord be praised we have got a home."

"Yes," thought Evgueny, "thank God we have got a home. Thank God we have had no revolution. We have our Emperor and we have our own country. For each of these men here there is a native star somewhere, shining above the place where he was born, a light burning for him in the windows of his home. . . . But what would become of them if they knew that that home existed no more? What must those feel whom revolution has driven from hearth and home, where they even may not dream of returning? Our present troubles come from aliens, foreigners, and people of another faith. But what must it be for those, whose misfortunes are caused by their own people?"

It was the first time that Evgueny, who until then had been indifferent to his country, suddenly began to speculate on the secret power of a man's own country, the lure of the place where he was born. But his thoughts grew confused and he found oblivion in sleep.

XXI.

THE soldiers who had been working in town related that a French General, "Sevastianoff," [65] was in great favor with the Sultan. "That would be the right man to ask to put in a word for us," the sailors said. "He might do something. No use going on suffering as we do."

This was true. The French General had, indeed, been recently sent as a special envoy to reside at the Sultan's Court. The Emperor of the French was preparing for war with Russia, and he sought to create allies for himself and enemies for the Tsar Alexander. For that purpose Sebastiani had arrived in Constantinople at the head of a numerous and brilliant mission. He had been ordered to convey the following message from Napoleon to the Sultan:

"Russia's ally, Prussia, has ceased to exist. I, Napoleon, have destroyed her army and I am master of her fortresses. My armies are on the Vistula. I am in Warsaw. Prussian and Russian Poland have risen against their oppressors and are raising an army to defend their independence. Sultan of the Turks! The time has now come for you to secure your independence and smite your hereditary foe. My ambassador has had my orders to treat with you and agree about necessary action to be taken jointly. Until now you have been too merciful to Russia. Future indulgence on your part will only prove your weakness. And if you are weak, you will lose your Empire."

The heads of the fifty Slavs who had been executed had been the Sultan's answer to Napoleon's message. It had been his intention to please his guests by adding another hundred and sixty heads, those of the shipwrecked Russian sailors, to that number; but Sebastiani, with a wave of his handkerchief, had made the Vizier stop the execution.

Such were the facts. But the Russian sailors did not know

[65] Russianized form of General Sebastiani's name.

them. They believed in the solidarity of the Christian states of Europe; and from Europe they expected justice.

Captain Kolomyitzeff called a meeting of his officers, and at that meeting it was decided to address a petition to General Sebastiani. Gangart composed the petition. Evgueny, who knew French as well as he knew his own language, translated it into French. Stolnikoff copied it out in his copper-plate hand, and all the officers signed it. All that remained was to get it into the right hands.

The Greeks who had brought presents from the Patriarch and had also furnished the prisoners with paper, pen and ink, refused to transmit the petition.

The Turks let them write without hindrance, but they laughed aloud at the idea that the prisoners genuinely hoped to obtain assistance from Christians in Europe.

"All giaours are dogs. But a giaour is worse to another giaour than the fiercest of dogs. You had better pray to Allah," the guards advised the sailors.

Time went on. The leaves of the vine which twined about the prison walls turned red, then brown and transparent. Cold rain began to fall at frequent intervals, and the wind blew from the sea with a dreary roar. Clouds hung low over the hills on the Asiatic shore. The mountain-tops grew white from the snow-storms that raged during the night. The prison-yard became a sea of mud. It crept into the prison-barn, rendering the stench worse than before. Life was becoming well nigh unbearable.

A storm had been raging for two days. Dry leaves, chips of wood and rubble came flying into the prison yard. The iron gates shook and creaked. There was no work for the prisoners, since not a barge could put to shore. The guards spoke of demolished houses, of uprooted trees, and roofs blown away by the storm.

Autumn was coming on fast, stripping trees of their beauty and clothing gardens and forests in beggars' rags. When dawn broke on the third day, the weather had calmed down. The sun

shone brightly in the morning and the prisoners were sent out to work all over the town.

A glazier was wanted at the French Embassy. Islamoff, who knew the trade, and with him Evgueny, (since they were chained together) were sent under escort to do the work.

Crossing himself, Kolomyitzeff handed the petition to Evgueny as they left.

"You must try and see the General himself. Everything lies in your hands now, bless you! You are our only hope."

Dressed in the coarse canvas jacket of the convict's garb they now wore instead of the tatters of uniform, Evgueny and Islamoff, escorted by two warders, walked side by side through the streets of Pera leading uphill to the Embassy.

Advised of their errand, the sentinels let them pass. In the large drawing-room into which they were led, a huge room furnished with gilt sofas and armchairs, with mirrors and small tables, and cushions and carpets, several window-panes had been broken by the wind. The room was empty. A vase held fading roses. A lilac silk shawl lay carelessly thrown on a sofa. A French soldier covered the floor near the windows with paper, brought some sheets of glass, some putty, a glazier's diamond, and handed them to Islamoff. Islamoff set to work. Evgueny helped. A light breeze came through the open window, ruffling Evgueny's long uncut hair. They worked in silence. They dared not speak. Evgueny was revolving in his mind the best way of delivering the petition. Would it not be a good plan to lay it under that shawl?

Voices were heard behind the door. A woman's voice asked in French:

"You think this might be useful?"

"Undoubtedly. It would help a great deal. But the man to do it must be a clever man."

A door opened, and a young woman entered the drawing-room, treading lightly on the carpet. Evgueny and Islamoff turned round to look. Evgueny had produced the petition, holding it ready in his hand.

The young woman went to the sofa and picked up the

shawl, then, looking at the two men at work, frowned with distaste.

Evgueny started. He had recognized her at once.

"Mademoiselle," he said in a faltering voice, offering her the petition.

Bewilderment was reflected on the face of the young woman, but she did not move.

"Mademoiselle Germaine," said Evgueny in a voice that sounded bolder.

A frown furrowed Germaine's brow. With an expression of strained attention, she looked at the face of the man who had spoken, this pale, thin, bearded face. But evidently she found nothing that looked familiar.

"Mademoiselle Germaine. . . . You may, perhaps remember the Russian sailor? In the Rue du Bac. And before that, at the hunt with the Emperor?" . . .

"Ah," she said in a drawl.

Something flared up in her dark eyes. She rapidly went up to Evgueny, took the paper from his hand, and as rapidly left the room without saying a word.

Islamoff had finished his work. A French man-servant was scraping up the bits of glass and rubbish. The prisoners in their chains stood in a corner of the room, waiting for their escort to come and fetch them.

"It's bound to be a winner, that paper of ours—you'll see!" whispered Islamoff. "They seem to be making a job of it. . . . You have a lucky hand, your Honor. We shall go home." Evgueny was silent. The color kept coming and going in his face.

Germaine here, in Constantinople! It was fate again. Fate was showing him once more the path he must follow. He had tricked fate once, and no good had come of it. Had he remained in Paris nothing would have happened. Perhaps, even the *Diana* would not have been lost. Who can say on what things, great or little, the fate of a man depends. One must only listen to its promptings.

He was in a fever of expectation. French officers and officials kept coming and going. Passing through the room,

they cast but indifferent glances at the prisoners, as though the latter were not human beings, but useless rubbish that had somehow got into this luxurious place.

They had been waiting for a considerable time. Islamoff was beginning to feel hunger pangs.

"They might send us a piece of bread," he whispered. "Our people, no fear, have had their dinner by now. We shall have to go without food to-day."

"Bother your bread," said Evgueny. "Our fate may perhaps be hanging in the balance." In his mind he had decided to make the present case a test. If they got back to liberty, he would follow Germaine. It would mean that such was his fate. Let old "Bless You" and the others return to Russia. As to himself, he would go where he was told to go by this young girl, who, for the third time already, had so fatally crossed his road. Over the abyss which had engulfed the *Diana,* over the heads of the executed Serbians and with his own only saved by the mercy of fate, through the iron gates of the prison, he had come back to her, and he would leave her no more. He would live for her, and for her he was ready to die.

The rays of the sun fell on the windows imprinting the shadows of the casements on the bright carpet and infusing life into the gorgeous roses, the shells and the trumpeting Cupids which were woven into its design. Evening was setting in, and the prisoners' feet ached from standing, but in their dirty clothes they dared not sit down. At last, their escort came, and with it a French corporal and a blacksmith with his tools. Evgueny's shackles were knocked off and Islamoff was led away alone.

"Good-bye, your Honor, do your best for us," said Islamoff, turning towards him at the door. "Now there is hope!"

The French corporal told Evgueny to follow him.

A French colonel in a tall-collared uniform with epaulets and with the cross of the Légion d'Honneur on his breast, was sitting at a large desk. His face was dry and cold. He seemed

to pierce Evgueny with his dark eyes. The corporal marched his prisoner to the desk.

"You may go," curtly said the Colonel.

The corporal left the room. The Colonel swept the tatters of the Russian with his eyes and produced from a wrapper the petition which had been copied by Stolnikoff. Looking at the paper he said:

"General Sebastiani has studied the application Captain Kolomyitzeff and his officers have made on behalf of themselves and the crew of the ship *Diana*. I have been instructed to convey to the officers and sailors of the valorous Russian Fleet, that the General is sincerely sorry for them, being a military man himself, and, therefore, their brother in arms. But the General regrets he can do nothing for them. Our Emperor, though most attentive, generous and gracious to those who wish him well, cannot be the same to those powers which impede him in his work for the welfare of France."

"But is Russia at war with France?"

"No, but the Emperor Alexander is doing all he can to bring about war. Under the circumstances, General Sebastiani does not consider it possible to discuss the fate of the valorous Russian sailors with His Majesty the Sultan. The General has already once saved you all from death."

"But, Colonel, we are not prisoners of war. We have only been shipwrecked."

"I know that . . . General Sebastiani has taken this into consideration. That is why the General proposes you should accept liberty as regards your own person and avail yourself of the opportunity of traveling to Petersburg in the company of some French people who are going there for commercial purposes. Once there, you will be able to approach your own Government for having your companions set free or, rather, bought free by paying ransom. You will need money for that. Try to obtain it there."

Evgueny bowed.

"Our General will furnish you with the necessary funds for your journey, and for buying clothes. He will also obtain a permit for you to leave Turkey."

"Colonel," said Evgueny, troubled and agitated by a host of most diverse and contradictory thoughts, "allow me to return immediately and appraise my Captain of this."

"That is not necessary. He will be informed by letter. Besides, nothing may come of it. You might only raise false hopes."

The Colonel rang a bell.

"The corporal will take you to a barber and let you have a bath. You will stay under surveillance at the Embassy until you start on your journey."

"But, Colonel," Evgueny tried to insist. "I must get some kind of paper from my Captain certifying my identity. The ship's seal is still in his possession. Without such a document I may not be even allowed to enter Russia."

The cold black eyes of the Colonel looked attentively at Evgueny. There was mockery in them. With a gesture of his hand he stopped the corporal who was entering the room.

"Listen, my friend," he said in a low voice to Evgueny, bending across the table. "Once you managed to get out of France as one 'merchant Sigouret'; as 'merchant Sigouret' you will, too, be able to enter Russia, the more so as you will be traveling in company with other merchants. Corporal," he continued, raising his voice. "You will go with Monsieur Sigouret and do as I told you."

XXII.

MARIA ALEXÉEVNA'S life and that of her daughter Nadenka went on, obeying the laws of fashion and the conventional code of the world which was theirs. Both carried a secret grief in their hearts, yet both were gay, animated and amiable in society.

In the middle of July Maria Alexéevna heard from old Kozodéeff that the corvette *Diana* had been wrecked near the coast of Albania. She had all reason to believe that her son had perished. Yet hope still kept uncertainly glimmering in her heart. God lets miracles happen sometimes. Endeavoring

to believe in a miracle, she had no masses said for the dead, but prayers for Evgueny's life and health. And the miracle occurred. The Danish Minister informed the Empress Maria Fedorovna that almost all of the ship's company and all the officers had been saved and were now prisoners with the Turks. Now that thought of Evgueny being dead ceased to torment Maria Alexéevna; but the fear of his possibly coming to grief in captivity, had taken its place.

Nadenka shared her mother's grief. She suffered for her brother no less than Maria Alexéevna did for her son.

Anxiety for Nadenka's future added to her mother's mental sufferings. Fofo apparently felt offended with Nadenka; he did not make his appearance at the datcha and Maria Alexéevna guessed the reason of his absence. However, when she questioned Nadenka about it, the girl looked straight into her mother's face with her deep blue eyes, and answered:

"I really could not say, maman, why Fedor Petrovitch neglects us. I have said nothing to offend him."

"You must have said something though."

"I only said I did not love him."

Maria Alexéevna's face grew purple. She reached for her smelling-salts and said in a depressed voice:

"And you call that 'only'? . . . O you wicked, wicked children! . . . You will be the cause of my death."

Nadenka had yet another grief, a grief of her own. Kouzma, who had been writing to her regularly from where he had been quartered, had suddenly stopped writing at all, and then, after a long interval, confidentially, through the medium of Annette Bolkonsky—"he could not possibly have chosen worse" thought Nadenka, "I am sure she has been trying to read it"—had sent her an extraordinary message. A tombstone, a cross and a broken heart, all drawn in China ink, were on the pink envelope.

The letter itself was a rambling, chaotic rigmarole, composed, to be just, not in the very best grammar.

"Nadejda Nikolaevna," wrote Kouzma. "Do not wonder at my silence and disappearance." Here followed a large ink-blot, carefully erased with a pen-knife. "I am a ruined man,

although not quite a scoundrel. If any tale concerning me reaches your ears, weigh everything well before you believe it and judge me. I am not worthy of seeing you. I have ruined my own happiness, but I will remain your devoted knight for ever. Blood will efface everything at the war. You must marry and forget your ill-fated Kouzma Minaieff." And at the bottom of the page, in small characters, was added: "But don't marry Fofo. That would be more than I could stand."

"He's gone and done some of his silly tricks again," thought Nadenka. "He has probably lost all chance of promotion, and now he is in despair about it. Dear, dear Kouzma! You silly boy! As though it were for that most exalted rank of a cornet which you are looking to that I love you? I love you as you are, with all your monkey tricks and nonsense."

However, this was yet another piece of unhappiness that added to her grief. Moreover, it was one she had to keep hidden from everybody. Cautiously, only just hinting at things, she ventured to confide in nurse Matveéna, and was more than agreeably surprised to find in her an ally.

"Have patience, child," the old woman said. "All will yet turn out well. He is young, his blood is hot, and mind, he is a Cossack. Let him sow his wild oats. It will be better so in the end. Don't be afraid. He won't go to ruin. A Cossack always wins through."

Autumn had set in. The gardens of Peterhof were clad in purple and gold. Draughts of chilly air came from the fountains. Dry leaves had begun to rustle sadly underfoot in the half-bare avenues of the Park. More and ever more often dark clouds rose in the west. They curled over the sea, hiding Cronstadt from view and threatening rain. At times the wind howled for three days and three nights at a stretch, tearing the faded leaves off the trees, ripping the dark pools of water, playing havoc with the canvas awnings of the summer houses. The gulf roared booming like the open sea. It reared up with heavy tides which inundated the shore. The sandy beach near the Park was under water. Dry, blackened

bits of broken reeds piled up on the grass under the very lilac bushes. The sea brought timber and wood on its waves, and once even the bloated corpse of a drowned man. The bathing-piers were broken and destroyed. The nights had become dark, and acts of larceny were committed under their protection. Here a canvas curtain disappeared from a balcony, garden furniture was carried away from another house. A mushroom pie, all ready to be served, was stolen from Dournoff's kitchen.

Maria Alexéevna's nerves were on edge. The roar of the sea and the howling of the wind made her think of Evgueny, and at the end of August she insisted on moving back to town.

The same empty social life recommenced in St. Petersburg: visiting and receptions, lunches, dinners, card-parties and theaters.

There was no news of Evgueny. Kouzma also was invisible, although his regiment had returned to St. Petersburg when the first autumn storms had begun in October.

Maria Alexéevna did not regret his absence. It fell in with her plans. Nadenka offered no comment. Morever, Kouzma had not altogether disappeared for her.

Every time the Ogloblins went to the theater, Nadenka found either a box of sweets or a bunch of flowers or of rare hot-house roses waiting for her on her chair. Someone was surrounding her with silent attentions.

"This certainly comes from Fofo," thought Maria Alexéevna. "He is clever, he will win in the end." But she kept her thoughts to herself. She was afraid of resistance on the part of Nadenka. "Young people nowadays have their own way of looking at things," she said to herself. "They are not what we were at their age."

The flowers were generally red and blue asters and verbenas. The box of sweets was dark-blue with red edges. The roses were crimson, tied with a dark-blue ribbon.

Nadenka understood very well who sent her those little marks of attention, and received them silently, with proud inward joy. Annette Bolkonsky also guessed who it was and squeezed Nadenka's hand under the barrier of the box, winking at her with a sly smile which meant: "He is faithful."

The weather was becoming gloomier every day. The Neva was on the point of freezing. Black waves splashed against the boat-bridge and struck the stones of the Quay. The pavements were coated with ice; the horses slipped on the large stones. It was difficult to walk or to drive. Maria Alexéevna hardly left the house. Only Nadenka and Mademoiselle Marjandi bravely walked along the Quay from the Chain-Bridge to the Liteiny Prospect, or along the Nevsky to the *Gostiny Dvor.*[66]

Looking very smart in her narrow Parisian dress and her short squirrel coat edged with sable, with a round sable hat *à la Catherine II* on her head and light felt boots on her feet, Nadenka was walking briskly against the wind on the Quay one day, when she met Antonsky who was coming towards her.

"You look like spring itself," he bleated, waving his stick.

"Don't, Khariton Ivanovitch," Nadenka said with a smile. "What kind of spring is it? The wind is blowing one off one's feet, snow-flakes are whirling in the air. Winter is coming."

"But you, Nadejda Nikolaevna, are shining like spring, roses are blooming on your cheeks and your eyes reflect the blue sky."

"Which doesn't exist."

"I beg your pardon, it does . . . in your eyes," the old gallant went on. "How is your mother's health?"

"Maman is well, thank God. But she is worrying about Evgueny. She went to see the Empress again yesterday."

"By the way . . . Where is my memory? . . . I have just met old Kozodéeff. You remember him? He also has two sons in the Navy. And he told me that your Evgueny had arrived in St Petersburg and had been living for over four days at one of the hotels of the town, wearing civilian clothes."

"Impossible!" Nadenka exclaimed, amazed.

"This is what he told me. Why should he lie? He is a serious old man."

"I must run and tell mother."

"I don't know. It may be better to wait a bit. . . . Supposing it were a mistake? If Evgueny were here, he would

[66] An arcaded row of shops.

have been to see you. You might upset your mother for nothing."

Nadenka was at a loss what to think.

"Evgueny is in St. Petersburg. . . . He has been here for over four days. . . . But why did he not come straight home? . . . No, there must be some mistake."

Thoughtful and upset, she returned home. However, she dared not hide her meeting with Antonsky from her mother and told her all about their conversation.

Maria Alexéevna wept and moaned and fussed with her smelling-salts.

"Maman," Nadenka said, "for Heaven's sake don't be so upset. Kozodéeff has certainly made a mistake. He only saw Jenia as a little boy at the Naval Corps. How could he recognize him now? It must have been someone else. And why should he be dressed in civilian clothes?"

"Ah, Nadenka, it is a bad sign when a double appears . . . a very bad sign. No good can come of it. My heart tells me . . ."

Dournoff was invited to a council. He looked with sympathy at Maria Alexéevna's cheeks, which had grown very pale, and held her handsome little hand in his own, stroking her fingers with his soft palm and saying in a cooing, calming bass voice:

"Of course it was someone else. As though Evgueny would behave like that? As though he would arrive in St. Petersburg, knowing how anxiously his mother and his sister are waiting for him, and would put up at a hotel?"

"He may be ill," Maria Alexéevna said languidly.

"That's all the same. Ill or well, he would have come home. Old Kozodéeff has simply made a mistake. He has lost his wits. I saw him last week. He says that if we ever have a war there will be a rising of the peasants. He emitted opinions which were unpleasant to listen to. No wonder if he talked idly. He imagined he had met Evgueny, and did not hesitate to affirm he had."

"Couldn't we make inquiries at the different hotels?"

"We should only make fools of ourselves, Maria Alexéevna.

I shall question Kozodéeff. And I will begin by sending an official to look through all the registers at all the barriers of the town, and make a list of all those who have arrived in the capital for the last two weeks. If Evgueny is really here, he has not come falling from the sky. The police must have been informed."

"Yes, please do all you can to find him," Maria Alexéevna said. "You are my only friend. I don't know what I should have done in these difficult circumstances without you."

She squeezed Dournoff's fingers with her perfumed little hand. Dournoff bent over it and imprinted a lengthy kiss on her palm.

Nadenka sighed and left the room.

XXIII.

Evgueny—the French merchant Sigouret according to his passport—had, indeed, been living for over four days already at the Adler Hotel in the Gorokhovaia Street. The company of French merchants who had arrived with him, and among whom were Germaine Réville and her brother André, had been met at the barrier of the town by the Pole Rjekhovsky, who had exchanged a few seemingly insignificant words with them.

"I have been waiting for you for over a week. All is ready," he said.

"This Russian gentleman has kept us back," said Germaine, introducing Ogloblin to the Pole.

Rjekhovsky took them to the hotel, where they occupied three rooms. Germaine settled down in the farthermost one, at the end of the passage, bringing an elegant French disorder and the scent of Parisian perfumes into the dull room of the cheap place. Evgueny shared the room next to hers with Gaston Poncelles, a small, thin, dark-haired man with a blue chin. The third room was taken by Germaine's brother André, who, in his civilian clothes, looked much more like a rough farmer than a lieutenant of the Chasseurs-à-Cheval; his co-

lodgers were a stout, rosy-cheeked Frenchman, Jean Moineau, and Rjekhovsky. Evgueny did not know whether there was anyone else except their company from Contantinople at the Adler Hotel.

From the time on, when his shackles had been taken off in Constantinople, he seemed to be living, as in a waking dream, a strange and unlikely life. It seemed sometimes that a high wall, invisible, yet no less solid than that of the prison in Constantinople, separated him from his former life, which had been so simple and so clear. It was the same here, in St. Petersburg.

Evgueny had just wakened. It was a cold November night. All was silent about him and outside the window. Gaston lay motionless in his bed near the wall, his head wrapped up in his blanket. Smouldering embers were glowing in the Dutch stove with its open damper.

Evgueny's thoughts were like a long unwinding ball of thread, and the silence of this unfamiliar, cheerless room seemed strange to him. The red glow of the stove was like a watchful eye. It reminded Evgueny of other nights in Constantinople and of the red lantern which was like the eye of the devil watching at the door. He seemed to hear the beating of the drum, then the indistinct muttering and the answer, which sounded so unlike any human voice: "Inshallah!" Evgueny thought of those who had remained behind.

He was free and was going to obtain their liberty. But was he free? Ever since that day in Constantinople when he had met all these people, he had never belonged to himself for a moment and had never been able to do as he liked.

He recollected how, when he had remained with them in the large room of the Turkish hotel, ruddy-cheeked Jean Moineau had come up to him and, drawing a pack of cards from his pocket and opening it with a masterly stroke, had said:

"Do you play?"

"Of course he does," Germaine had said laughing and putting her hand on Evgueny's shoulder.

He had sat down to play.

They had played in Constantinople, on the Italian ship that was taking them to Odessa and at all the post-relays where they had to wait for horses. They went on playing here, at the Adler Hotel. They played with passion. At first Evgueny had staked the rest of the two hundred Turkish pounds that had been given to him for buying a new suit of clothes, then he had won up to a thousand pounds, exchanged them for Russian rubles in Odessa, had lost all he had, and had now been playing for some time on credit. He did not even ask himself if they were playing seriously or for fun. This fever of gambling seemed to blend in his consciousness with that other feverish passion which had entirely taken hold of him.

In the intervals between playing and the short snatches of time he spent alone with Germaine, he walked and drove with her about town, showing her Petersburg at her request.

Germaine had queer tastes, and Evgueny would have thought them queerer still, had he not walked beside her as in a dream, and had he been capable of reasoning calmly.

Germaine was not interested in the Hermitage Gallery, in the cabinet of curiosities or *Kunstkammer,* with its dreadful little monsters preserved in alcohol and its stuffed animals coming from all the ends of the world, or in the imposing Kazan Cathedral with its colonnades embracing the large square in front of it, or the Alexandro-Nevsky *Lavra,* where lay the conqueror of Macdonald, Souvoroff. Neither did the Neva, the Nevsky Prospect, the light-houses of the Exchange, the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, the little Palace of Peter the Great in the Summer Gardens—in a word, the peculiar beauty of St. Petersburg,—attract her at all. She was interested in the Admiralty, the building of the General Staff and especially the cartographic and topographic sections. When she passed them in the evening, she could not resist the temptation to stop and look through the lighted windows of the basement, where she could see workmen turning heavy wheels in a huge low-vaulted work-shop, and large bands of paper fall on a stone or on a copper-sheet. She questioned Evgueny about those workmen. Were they serfs or free men? What was their salary, where did they live, were they content with their lot? Where

were the copper-sheets kept which served for those beautiful maps? At her request, Evgueny several times inquired from the house porters about the addresses of some small officials. Two or three times she went up with Evgueny quite close to look at the heavily bolted doors of the dark cellars where the copper-sheets for printing military maps were kept.

Her companions were busy elsewhere and disappeared from early morning in the company of Rjekhovsky, who knew Russian perfectly and seemed to be quite at home in St. Petersburg.

What kind of merchants were they and what did they trade in? Was André Réville also a merchant? They had neither goods nor samples of any kind with them and never brought home any of either. However indifferent Evgueny was to everything and however blinded by passion, he asked Germaine one day, when they were out on their usual walk, what they were supposed to be trading in.

Germaine looked at him with a long glance of her deep, hot eyes in their setting of smoky topaz, and Evgueny had felt the usual curtain of sultry mist hide the street from him. He did not see anything except that face and did not realize anything, except that he was entirely in her power.

After a few moments of silence, she said,—and her words sounded like a mockery, or a challenge:

"In human souls."

They did not revert to the question, and Evgueny had the feeling, as he walked beside Germaine, that the invisible wall between his past and his present had become still higher. The necessity of going to the Admirality to intercede for his comrades in their misfortune, the consciousness of living for five days in St. Petersburg without having found time to see his mother, who did not even know he was safe, all seemed to have receded to some distant plane. The thought of his duty sometimes dimly rose in his mind, only to disappear immediately.

Germaine and Evgueny were returning home one evening, which sets in very early in November. It was quite dark on

the stairs of the Adler Hotel. Not a single candle or night-lamp was burning there. The door creaked with a piteous sound. Upstairs, where their rooms were, two persons were talking Russian in the passage. Evgueny thought he recognized the voice of Gaston. The voice said in Russian, but with the accent of a Polish Jew:

"To-morrow night then. . . . All is ready."

Someone spoke rapidly, in a muffled voice, as though trying to persuade the other, and Gaston said again:

"Very well. The day after to-morrow."

A door upstairs opened and a dark figure in a long coat appeared in the lighted space of the upper passage and began rapidly to go down the stairs, almost stumbling against Evgueny. He felt the smell of cheap tobacco and onion. The edge of the stranger's sleeve swept his hand and he felt the touch of rough cloth. The pulley creaked downstairs.

"What does this mean?" said Evgueny. "Gaston speaks Russian?"

"Nonsense, my dear friend," said Germaine. "What are you going to imagine next? Gaston is not even at home. Come to my room for a moment, will you?"

A soft twilight reigned in her room. The window was a dim gray, transparent square, and without, across the narrow courtyard, the yellowish wall of another building could be seen. There also was a window; the light curtain was drawn and the little red flame of a church-lamp burning in front of an icon, glimmered through. A special, touching cosiness came from that distant red spot on the curtain. Evgueny looked at it and sighed. "Well, why do we stand like this?" Germaine said, capriciously. "Aren't you going to help me take off my coat?"

In the twilight, things lost their contour, and Evgueny could rather feel than see Germaine, who was standing quite near. He helped her to take off her fur coat and put it on the bed. Germaine sank down into an arm-chair by the window. Evgueny knelt down before her and began to kiss her hands. When he kissed the soft, perfumed little palm, it contracted as though from tickling and squeezed his lips, and he could hear her laugh gently. All was quiet in the adjacent

rooms, where lived the Frenchmen. Apparently there was no one at home. Evgueny was growing bolder. He kissed Germaine's arm at the curve of the elbow and his fingers crept higher.

Both were silent. One could only hear in the room Germaine breathing fast, and sometimes her slight moan or laugh. She unbuttoned her dress with a rapid, imperceptible movement. The little table that stood near the window hindered Evgueny from bending close to her.

"Move it away," she said slowly and languidly. Her flaming cheeks touched his face. He kissed them. He kissed her hair, her neck and her breast. He embraced her feet and kissed them, feeling the pleasant freshness of her knees under his hot lips. His lips became greedy.

"Let me go . . ."

"Germaine?"

"Do you want to offend me? You are a knight . . . a nobleman. . . . Let me go!"

Her voice sounded cold, almost hostile.

"Let me go! Russian bear . . ."

She slipped out of his embrace and, straightening herself with a lissom movement, walked to the window.

"How late it is," she said in a tired voice. "It is dawning. Light the candle."

Evgueny's hands were trembling and he could not strike a light.

"Give me the steel," she said.

She struck a spark with a strong movement and lit the tinder and the candle. The flame lit up the room, summoning the surrounding objects from the darkness.

"Draw the blind."

Evgueny obeyed. She went to the mirror.

"I look a fright! See how dishéveled I am! You are a perfect savage. Now go to bed."

"Germaine?"

"Oh, do keep quiet, my friend," her voice now sounded calm and even indifferent. "We have played at love, and that will do. . . . You must remember that I am a girl. . . . Yes,

by the way, I must speak about something quite different. I don't like mentioning it, but, this morning, Jean begged me to remind you of your debt. You owe him quite a lot, it seems. He begs you to settle your account."

"But, Germaine," said Evgueny, "I thought . . ."

The mist that had been veiling his eyes was lifting, and he looked with confusion into the cold, passionless face of Germaine, who was shivering, stretching herself lazily and yawning.

"What did you think?" she asked, stifling a yawn.

"I thought it was for fun . . . on credit. . . ."

"They do not play for fun," Germaine said dryly. "This is a card-debt, a debt of honor. . . . You are very strange altogether. . . . What are you waiting for? We have already been five days in Petersburg. You might have gone to see your chiefs and do what you have to do."

The blood rushed to Evgueny's face at this reproach. He looked at Germaine, who was standing before him in her crumpled dress, with her breast bare, looking pale and tired, but more beautiful than ever. He wanted to retort, to justify himself somehow, but suddenly he felt the curtain of mist redescend before his eyes, and a wave of blind desire overwhelm his consciousness.

"Germaine," he moaned. "I cannot do without you. . . ."

"The one does not exclude the other," Germaine said coldly. "Go to the Admiralty to-morrow; try to obtain some money . . . as much money as possible. Pay your debts. We shall see later on."

"Tell me, Germaine! Are you going to be mine?"

"Perhaps. . . . And now good-night. . . . I am sleepy."

Evgueny lay in bed in his room, trying to understand what had happened to him and what he was to do.

"I am a ruined man. I am rolling into an abyss. I shall never see my mother and sister, nor Annette, nor Fofo and Kouzma. I am entirely in the power of Germaine. But such is my fate. It is my destiny to be with her. Then why think

and be afraid? And then, there is this debt. It must be paid at all costs. But how big is it? I never thought about it. Several thousands? . . . May be, several times ten thousands?"

Evgueny turned in his bed. He lay with his face downwards, pressing it to his pillow, so that red stripes danced before his eyes. "Yes, this is fate. Fate laid its hand on me from the very beginning, when we overheard Napoleon's conversation with Prince Kourakin, Germaine and I." His thoughts obstinately took their usual course:

"And the fact that General Sebastiani knew I had left Paris with a false passport, that also was fate. And even my being here, with those French merchants. What do they trade in after all? . . . Human souls?" . . . He remembered Germaine's answer. And immediately after, as though effacing this thought, her voice resounded in his ears: "Move it away. . . ." What suppressed passion there had been in that low, velvet voice! He felt the palpitation of her young breast under his lips. "What bliss! I must put an end to this torment. I must have done with my comrades, with my mother, with Nadenka, and return to Paris with Germaine. I will live there beside her. Obey her in everything. . . . Trade in human souls, . . . if necessary."

Evgueny shivered, turned on his side and lay facing the room. "Silly boy! . . . Nothing will teach me to be wise."

It was almost light; and life was stirring in the courtyard. The water-carrier was harnessing his horse to his barrel. Presently its wheels rattled on the stones as it drove out into the street. The *dvornik* [67] was sweeping the yard. A pile of wood tumbled apart somewhere with a rumbling noise.

An autumnal freshness came through the open *fortochka.*[68] There was a smell of the sea and of the Neva in the air. Gaston lay wrapped in his blanket. He was breathing quietly and evenly in his deep morning sleep. There was a bristle of black beard on his face; and his long, hooked nose lay against the pillow.

[67] House-porter.
[68] Casement-window.

"Why, he is a Jew," thought Evgueny. "And it *was* he who spoke. It was his voice, of course."

Evgueny got up and went out into the passage.

The attendant on duty was snoring, his head reposing on his arms, which lay crossed on the table. The air in the passage was cold and smelt of smoke. Evgueny passed into the kitchen. The old woman-cook in her soiled jacket and tucked in skirt was lighting the large samovar of the hotel. Wood was burning gaily in the kitchen-range, and the yellow flame had not yet carbonized its fresh whiteness.[69]

"May I wash here, grandmother?" [70]

"Is there no water in your room?"

"There is, but I don't want to wake my comrade."

"Very well, then, you may wash here if you like."

The icy water from the tap refreshed Evgueny. He looked dubiously at his creased and travel-stained suit, threw a cloak over his shoulders, put on a round hat and went out through the back-entrance.

The Fontanka [71] was sparkling, reflecting the joyful morning sun. Wood was being unloaded from the barges falling with a gay rattling sound into odoriferous heaps which smelt strongly of pitch. Heavy horses, with ornamented trappings, harnessed to long carts, were waiting for the wood. Nose-bags were tied to their heads, and they were loudly munching oats. A black fishing-boat with a box filled with water in the middle, where live fish were swimming, was moving along the Fontanka, manned by two fishermen in white shirts and black waistcoats. Silver drops fell from their oars, which were golden in the sunlight. Evgueny walked slowly and wearily to the Admiralty. He did not know what he was going to say and did not think of what he was going to do afterwards. He only wanted to have done with his business as soon as possible and to return immediately to Germaine.

[69] Birch-wood was mostly burnt in Russia.

[70] It was customary for Russians to address an old peasant or serving-woman by the name of "grandmother" or even "aunt."

[71] A narrow river flowing into the Neva.

XXIV.

At the Admiralty everything went off smoothly. In the reception room, the Lieutenant on duty, Bostrom, who had been Evgueny's school-mate at the Naval Corps, recognized him at once. Evgueny's former tutor, who was now serving at the Admiralty, also came up, and, notwithstanding Evgueny's shabby suit and his passport in the name of the French merchant Sigouret, he was immediately received by the Marquis de Traversé, Minister of the Russian Navy, himself. The situation was soon cleared up.

Circumstances were uncommonly favorable to the company of the *Diana*. General Koutouzoff had just put to rout the troops of the Sublime Porte. Negotiations for peace were pending. Two days ago, a letter had come from General Sebastiani, informing the Minister of the fate of the ship's company. An insignificant sum, a mere fifty thousand rubles, was demanded by the Turkish Treasury in repayment of the cost of keeping the Russian prisoners in Constantinople. This sum had already been assigned by the Ministry.

"The best is to confide this money to you—you know all the circumstances," the small, dry Frenchman in the uniform of a Russian admiral said to Evgueny. "You will start tomorrow with a courier's passport for Odessa. There you will see the Captain commanding the port, Telessnitzky, and he will send you off to Constantinople on some neutral ship. Once there, you will hear from General Sebastiani, to whom you must deliver the money, and he will help the ship's company home."

An official of the Admiralty fetched the money from the Treasury. A courier brought the passport and the order for post horses from the Foreign Department.

The Marquis was beaming with pleasure at the thought that Captain Kolomyitzeff and his company would be free before another month was over.

"Captain Kolomyitzeff . . . poor man. I know him. A

brave and loyal officer, always faithful to his duty. I bet he has saved his log book."

"He has, your High Excellency," Evgueny said with a smile.

When Evgueny had left the Minister and was going down the wide staircase leading to the chief gateway, he had the feeling that only a slight tension of will was needed on his part, and the wall which had risen between him and his past would be gone. One more effort, and the merchant Sigouret would disappear, and the honest Russian Lieutenant Ogloblin would take his place. In the clean, fresh air of the Admiralty halls, the power that held him in Germaine's thrall seemed to have disappeared leaving no trace. Evgueny looked up boldly at the plaster statue of Neptune who seemed to lift his trident in blessing.

"I'll go straight from here to my mother. I'll spend the night there; and to-morrow, at dawn, I'll start for Odessa with my courier's passport."

The November day was already fading. Lamplighters were hurrying down the streets, lighting the round oil lanterns, that looked like glow-worms in the evening mist. A steady, strong eastern wind was blowing, driving before it large flakes of soft snow. Their little wooly stars melted on Evgueny's eyelashes.

He saw an empty cab on the opposite side of the boulevard. He hurried towards it.

"Evgueny!"

The slender figure of a woman in a short coat of foreign cut, stood suddenly beside him, as though taking shape in the mist. The well-known scent of Parisian perfume was wafted into his face.

Germaine took his arm and clung to him. The tall silhouettes of surrounding buildings receded and disappeared. Evgueny saw nothing more, nor did he think of anything. The beloved face, rosy from the frost, touched his shoulder. Her eyes looked into his.

A crowd of officials leaving the Admiralty, went past overtaking them. One of them pushed them and excused himself.

Evgueny did not even notice it. The whole universe blended for him into one desire—to be alone with Germaine. They were walking towards the square where the monument of Peter the Great stood. Not far from there was the house belonging to Dournoff where his mother lived. But Evgueny did not see where he was going. He answered Germaine's questions almost mechanically.

"I have been waiting for you. How long you have been! Did you see the Minister?"

"Yes, he received me immediately."

"Did everything go off well? Nothing unpleasant happened to you?"

"Nothing whatever. He was very kind."

"Did he let you have the money?"

"Yes."

"All the fifty thousand?"

Evgueny did not even wonder at Germaine knowing how much money he had received.

"Yes, fifty thousand rubles. I have had orders to start to-morrow for Odessa." He had no sooner said this than the thought of his impending separation with Germaine, struck him painfully with its inevitableness. "How shall we part?" he said.

Germaine clung still closer to Evgueny. The mist before his eyes, through which he saw the black rippling water of the Neva, grew thicker.

"Why should we part?"

The languid, irresistible notes were in her voice.

"We'll return to the hotel. You'll pay what you owe to Jean. It is a little over fifty thousand. My brother will pay the balance. And to-morrow we embark and sail for France. There's our ship. It is waiting for us."

She pointed to the Neva. A light two-masted brig stood opposite the Academy of Arts. In the cobweb of her masts and cordage, she loomed through the veil of snow-flakes driving on the river like a vague and faltering phantom.

"But there is duty," Evgueny said hesitatingly. "My first duty is to deliver my comrades from captivity."

"If you love me, your first duty is to enter my house as an honest man. You must begin by paying your gambling debt. This is the first duty of an honest man. You need not worry about your comrades. I shall write to General Sebastiani, and they will be set free. That is what you have to do if you want me to love you. Love is a sacrifice. If you love me, you must sacrifice everything else and go away with me. In a fortnight we shall be in Paris. You deceived me once, you deserted me. It did not bring you luck. If you deceive me again, something still worse will happen to you. Then you will have only yourself to blame for it. . . . The hour of a last choice has struck, and you must make that choice. We shall either part forever, or else this ship shall take us to our happiness."

"This ship shall take us to our happiness," repeated Evgueny as though bewitched.

His eyes involuntarily turned to the Neva where he had seen the vessel. Dark and gloomy amid the eddies of the whirling snow, the river was deserted. Like the phantom she had appeared to him, the ship seemed to have melted away. A feeling of fear came over Evgueny, only to disappear at once before the hot wave which he felt issuing from this woman who clung to him so closely. It penetrated his whole being.

"Your fate is to unite your life to mine. We shall go to Paris, and then for a rest to the Chateau de Choisy. You remember the old Marquis? Is he not an honest man and doesn't he come of an ancient family of noblemen? Ask him, and he will tell you I am right in trying to make you pay your card-debt. It is a debt of honor. Better die, better shirk your duty to the State, than fail to redeem your word you have pledged at the card-table."

Evgueny thought with despair that all Germaine was saying was true enough. For wasn't it in Russia too, in those circles where he moved, considered dishonest of a man if he failed to pay what he had lost at cards? He could leave his tailor's bill unpaid, reducing the man to poverty, he could increase the rate of obligatory work of his bondsmen or sell them sever-

ally. . . . All this he could do without incurring the blame of society. But he could not leave his card-debts unpaid, that was not worthy of a nobleman. It was horrible, yet so it was. Evgueny felt his resistance to what Germaine was saying weakening with every moment.

"So you consider that I need not carry out the orders I have had from the Marquis de Traversé?"

"Why should you think of the Marquis de Traversé? He lives and serves in Russia and he is happy there. You will live and serve in France, and you also will be happy there. Believe me, good and loyal service is better appreciated there than it is here. You will go with me, from this land of serfs, this land of cold and darkness, to a beautiful land of free men, where there are none of your terrible blizzards, where the sun shines and laurels are green all through the winter, and the air is warm. We shall be together. Is it not happiness?"

Germaine had just left Evgueny's room. The delicate scent of her perfume lingered there. She had received the whole packet of money from him and had gone to deliver it to Jean. She returned soon, bringing some hot tea. Evgueny drank two cups, one after the other. He was dying with thirst.

"You are ill, my darling. You are quite weak," she said tenderly, putting her little palm to his forehead. "Do you feel feverish?"

"No, it is nothing. I am simply tired. I did not sleep all night and I have had a day full of excitement."

"Lie down, darling—have a rest."

"Yes, I think I shall. It's queer, but I feel giddy, and my legs are quite weak after that tea."

"Of course you are tired and must lie down."

Germaine left the room. Evgueny lay down, dressed as he was, drew his blanket over him and covered himself with his cloak besides.

When he woke up he thought he had not been sleeping long, no more than half-an-hour. Yet it must have been late, for the candle had almost burnt to its socket. Gaston's bed

was empty. Evgueny strained his ear, listening. He heard an unfamiliar voice in the next room. Germaine had a visitor. Jealous suspicion took hold of him. He got up quickly and went out into the passage. The clock struck twelve hoarsely. The attendant was asleep on a sofa in the passage. The oil night-lamp was throwing shadows on the walls and the ceiling. Evgueny went up to Germaine's door and knocked.

"Who is there?"—asked Germaine. The conversation in the room ceased abruptly.

"One moment," she said.

The door opened, letting Germaine pass, and closed again at once. Quick though it had opened and shut, Evgueny had had time to notice Germaine's brother André, Gaston, and a third man, a stranger, in the room. This stranger had a common round Russian face and was dressed in a fox coat of Russian cut.

"Come," said Germaine, seizing Evgueny by the hand. "I can feel that you are feverish."

She took him back to his room almost by force. She was still wearing her Parisian coat and round hat, as she had been dressed in the day-time. She seemed to have just returned from somewhere.

"Who is that in your room?" Evgueny asked hoarsely.

"Why, you saw them, André and Gaston."

"No . . . there was still another man, a Russian. Who is he and why was he there?"

Evgueny was, indeed, shivering as though with fever. Germaine answered quickly:

"You are always imagining things. The other day you thought you had heard Gaston speak Russian, now it is a Russian who has come here. You are simply ill. . . ."

"But I saw three men in your room."

"Well, and what if you did? The third man was Rjekhovsky. You simply did not recognize him. He has bought a Russian *shouba.*"

"Why are you dressed like that? Where have you been?"

"I haven't been anywhere. It was cold in my room. They

did not heat the stove in the day-time. And later on the window was open. How strange you are!"

Putting her hands upon his shoulders, she made him sink down in an arm-chair which stood, as the one in her room, in the corner by the window, bent over him, and began slowly kissing his eyes.

"Are you happy?" she asked with great tenderness.

Evgueny was silent. He felt with joy the pleasant warm pressure of her body. The soft sleeves of her velvet-covered fur coat touched his neck and his cheek. He drew her down upon his lap. He put his arms round her knees. High Russian felt boots were on her little feet.

"What is this?" he asked astonished.

"I was cold, my darling."

"It is warm here. Take off your things."

He wanted to unbutton her fur coat, but she stopped his hand and kissed him with a long kiss on the lips. Evgueny pressed her still closer to himself.

"Wait, darling," she said in that suddenly sinking and alluring voice, whose call never failed to keep Evgueny in her power. "Not here! Gaston might come in. Wait for half an hour. I shall send them away soon. When Gaston returns to your room and goes to sleep, come to me quietly."

She slipped off his knees.

"Don't be long," he said, stretching his arms to her.

At the door she turned round to him and said in a scarcely audible whisper:

"Have patience, you silly darling. . . . In an hour's time I will be yours."

Evgueny leaned back and sank into sweet forgetfulness.

"In an hour's time I will be yours."

The candle flickered up with a red flare, and the black twisted end of the wick bent over and fell hissing into the molten tallow. A blue flame like a bubble wandered over the brass of the candlestick and then went out, leaving the room in darkness.

Evgueny, who had been dozing, heard cautious footsteps in the passage. Germaine's visitors were probably leaving. But Gaston did not return. Another half-hour passed. The little hotel was very quiet. From time to time the heavy snoring of the attendant asleep on his leather couch could be heard coming from the passage. The clock hoarsely struck. It was either one o'clock or half-past.

Still Gaston did not return.

Evgueny got up and began to grope his way to the door leading into the passage. He opened it. The passage was quite dark. The oil night-lamp had been extinguished, and, in the darkness, there seemed to be no end to the passage. Moving cautiously, Evgueny reached Germaine's door and knocked. His knock had been soft, but in the surrounding silence, it seemed to him very loud. There was no answer. Taking care not to make a noise, he put his hand on the door-handle and turned it. The door opened noiselessly. It had not been locked. Impenetrable darkness reigned in the room, the air was hot and dense and strangely saturated with the smell of tobacco and wine.

"Germaine," whispered Evgueny.

There was no answer. The darkness seemed to grow denser still. A vague feeling of anxiety contracted Evgueny's heart. With trembling hands he shut the door close behind him, and, afraid to knock against some obstacle, made his way slowly to Germaine's bed, until he had touched its head in the darkness. Bending down, he felt the fresh softness of the pillows. They had not been touched. Then he groped about for the night-table and found on it flint and steel and also a candle. His hands were shaking so violently that he was scarcely able to strike a light and blow on the tinder.

The room was empty.

On the table near the window, where Germaine's looking-glass used to stand surrounded with powder-boxes and puffs, cosmetics and scent-bottles, a large hotel tray with the remnants of a cold supper, empty bottles and half-empty glasses met his eye. In the corner behind the door, where, covered

with a chintz curtain, her dresses had been hanging, the wall was bare. It was clear Germaine had gone.

Evgueny let himself sink down into her arm-chair,—the very same where she had been sitting but yesterday, when she had drawn him into her arms. The solitary candle lit the deserted room drearily. Now that Germaine had gone, it was an ordinary, dull hotel room.

A veil seemed to drop from Evgueny's eyes.

"So that was what they traded in! Human souls. . . ."

And he, Evgueny, had sold his soul to them. All that had appeared obscure and incomprehensible to him before, now rose before his mind so simple, so clear, so easy to understand that only a child could have failed to gauge it.

Instead of fate, whose majestic stride he had believed was treading through his existence, it had been mere sordid people treading his life into the mire with base scheming. Nothing had been casual and accidental. Even that first meeting near Prince Kourakin's house in Paris had not been by chance. They had been on the look-out for him; they had known beforehand where to find him. Like a moth, he had fluttered straight into the fire. Like a fly caught in a spider's web, he had got himself entangled in the meshes of their scheming. Germaine had known everything and had been watching him and Prince Kourakin. All the time she had been whole-heartedly working for the welfare and good of France and the evil of Russia. Who else but she or her confederates had found out that "le marchand Sigouret" and he were one and the same person. "Salus patriæ suprema lex." Yes, to her it had been so. But what about him? Had he not himself, with rare levity of mind, taken her to see the place where the maps were printed which Napoleon needed for his war with Russia? It was only now it came back to Evgueny's mind what Captain Kolomyitzeff had told him about General Tchernyshoff, who, five years ago, in Paris, dressed in the modest garb of a civilian, had wandered about the narrow streets behind the Champs Elysées, meeting poor French officials and bribing them to disclose the secrets of their War Department. His doings had been discovered, Tchernyshoff himself had managed to

escape, but the officials had been arrested and had suffered the penalty of death. And they had well deserved it, for were they not French?

Now all those people, the Révilles, Rjekhovsky, Moineau and Poncelles, had been doing the same, they had been bribing Russian officials. And when all this was discovered, what awaited these officials but the sentence of death they justly deserved? But then he, too, Evgueny, deserved it as well.

Yes, he had nothing else to expect. He was a deserter . . . a traitor.

Not to sunclad heights of passion, but to an abyss of vice and crime, he had been led; and his fate had been Germaine, whom he loved.

"They must be stopped . . . brought back . . . arrested. The money must be taken back from them . . ."

Evgueny went back to his room with the candle in his hand. Gaston was not there, of course, and only now Evgueny noticed that the latter's valise also was gone. It was clear that they all had sailed away on that ship. He looked into the third room. It likewise was empty.

Evgueny threw his cloak, which had not yet had time to dry, upon his shoulders and began hurrying down the stairs. He found the key, which was hanging on the wall, and opened the entrance-door. The cold of night enveloped him.

XXV.

A STEADY east-wind was blowing from the Ladoga Sea. Silver flakes of snow were whirling about in the air, sparkling in the light of sparsely scattered street-lamps. The moon shone dim through a gray veil. The snowstorm was abating. It was thawing. Under-foot, in some places, the snow lay in long drifts, into which Evgueny sank knee-deep, in others it had been blown away by the wind, laying bare the slippery, glistening stones of the pavements and the wet planks of the side-walks.

Evgueny crossed the bridge over the Fontanka and went

down the Gorokhovaia without very well knowing where he was going. The houses were dark, there were no people about. Now and then, on street-corners, the smoky lantern in a watchman's box twinkled in the dark, and, passing, Evgueny could see the watchman dozing beside it, with his halberd placed against the side of the box. All things around looked gloomy, as though waiting for some dire occurrence.

Should he go and confess? To whom? Should he tell all to that red-haired fellow yonder with the red woman's shawl tied round his head under his shako, who was looking at him suspiciously? Snow lay like a flat cake on his shako, snow lay on his shoulders, it was sticking in the folds of his greatcoat, to the blade of his halberd. . . . No, that man would not understand. . . . Should he run and tell the Marquis de Traversé? He would give an order for their arrest, they would be executed, Germaine too would be put to death. Or should he go to his mother and tell her all? She would gasp with horror and run to Dournoff for advice. Dournoff would say that such a son was no son to her; and she would repudiate him. And Nadenka, too, would be sure to renounce him. Where was there a way out? There was only one, and that, too like the narrowest of chinks in a tall boarded-up fence, looked almost impracticable. It was to obey Germaine's call and try to join her and go away with her on that phantom-ship. There was still a chance that it had not yet sailed.

Evgueny hurried on, struggling with the folds of his long black cloak which the wind was blowing around his legs. They were carrying him to those low vaults where the ordnance-maps were kept in the basement of the building of the General Staff.

He wanted to make sure. To make sure of what? He was unable to answer the question himself. What if he found those people still there? What if he surprised them, catching them at the very act of committing their crime? Both questions which his mind discarded at once with a hopeless: "Too late!"

He had already reached the Moika. There were the cast-iron railings of the quay, the stone pillars. The tall buildings of the Crown scowled at him with the dark embrasures of their windows. Not a single light anywhere, no sign of life, no sound

except the whistling of wind and the vain sloshing of waves. And here was that vault. Its door was shut and bolted, and the heavy padlock hung glaring fiercely at Evgueny. The fresh track of a dray-sledge showed clear on the snow-drift. Evgueny followed the track.

It led to the large square of the Winter-Palace. It twisted round and round and was lost in a maze of tracks of other vehicles. A vague twilight reigned all around. Snow-flakes whirled in the air blinding his eyes. The skirt of his cloak, blown about by the wind, kept trammeling his legs. Wherever he turned his eyes, there was nothing but a mass of murky white. No houses, no street-lamps. Evgueny felt as though he had been walking in circles round and round the same spot. He wanted to shout but did not dare. A watchman might come running and ask: "Who is shouting there? A deserted, a traitor who has gambled away money belonging to the Crown? Come along . . ." And he would be taken into custody.

"No—not that, better die," thought Evgueny. "Death is a way out. Not a narrow chink in a high fence, but a door opened wide to any one to pass. No tribunal can lay its hands on a man who has passed that door."

He walked straight on and stumbled against some houses. A narrow street stretched away before his eyes with the two lines of its sparsely set, dimly twinkling lamps running to a point in the distance. Looking attentively, Evgueny found it was the Galernaia. He reached the canal and then turned to the right towards the Quay.

Seen through the curtain of night and snow the Neva seemed a shoreless waste of water. Small black waves ran rushing onwards with a low murmur. A raft, frosted all over with snow, swayed on the water at Evgueny's feet. With loud, monotonous slapping, the waves kept beating its sides. A flock of snow-covered row-boats with up-curved sterns, crowded close to the raft. By the side of a shelter standing on the edge of the raft, a lantern was winking its red eye.

"If I took one of those boats there and tried to reach the

ship? But then I should have to row against the current, that would take a long time."

No sooner had this thought crossed his mind than he saw the ship.

Carrying a full poise of wind-inflated sail both on her two masts and on her bowsprit, the mysterious brig was sailing at full speed about a hundred sajenes away from Evgueny, in the middle of the river. The water churned foaming under the keel, cleft apart in big waves, and the smooth strip of her wake trailed astern. She carried no lights either on her prow or on her sides, and no light showed through the port-holes. It seemed as though, with no crew on board and no one at the helm, this phantom sailed westward in the ominous darkness.

Clutching the snow-coated granite of the parapet, Evgueny stood, following the ship with his eyes. Gently rocking on the waves, she passed and disappeared in the mist.

"I must do away with myself. I must die, die, whatever it costs."

However, it was not so simple to put an end to his life. He discarded the idea of throwing himself into the water. "As soon as I come up, I'll want to swim back to life, I know, miserable wretch that I am," he thought with contempt. "I should want to live. I am a good swimmer." The idea of hanging himself was horrible. It was disgusting to think of himself hanging on a rope, with a blue face and a lolling tongue. Besides, there was no rope. Best of all was to blow out his brains. But for that he needed a pistol.

All this was so complicated and so insufferably dull, as though he had to think out the details of his own funeral. Yet somewhere and somehow, it had to be done. Immersed in these thoughts, Evgueny walked back along the Gorokhovaia to the Adler Hotel.

It was dawning. The streets were filling with workmen. The smoky lamps in the streets were expiring. The houses looked like flat drawings in the shadowless light. When

Evgueny returned to the hotel, Pavloushka,[72] the attendant was already sweeping the staircase.

"Well, did you see the French people off?" he asked Evgueny.

Evgueny did not answer.

"The young lady's room has been retained for you and paid for a week in advance. They told me all about it in detail before leaving. Shall I bring your tea?"

"Who retained the room?" asked Evgueny, looking dully at Pavloushka.

"The man is drunk," thought the latter. "He must have had too much when he was seeing them off, and has not yet had time to come round."

"Why, that man Boston."

"Boston. . . . What Boston? . . . You probably mean Gaston? But does he speak Russian?"

"He is drunk . . . he certainly is," thought Pavloushka again. "Or else he must have lost his memory."

"Why, they all do, and quite distinctly, too, although one can hear they are foreigners."

"I see . . ." drawled Evgueny. He was so struck by what he had just heard, that he did not know what to say. "Here again, they have made a fool of me," he thought bitterly.

Evgueny went to the room that had been retained for him. It had been tidied. It smelt no more of wine and tobacco, nor of Germaine's perfumes. There was only the usual hotel smell of fresh bed-linen, and a slight smell of smoke. The stove had been lit; logs of birch-wood were crackling gaily and the damper hummed.

Pavloushka brought a large black tray with a big bellied pot with hot water and a smaller one with tea, a cup, some bread and butter and sugar.

Diaphanous steam curled up from the nose of the pot. A current of fresh air came from the open *fortochka* and with it came also the street cries of hawkers, who were coming and going. Evgueny got up from his chair and began pacing the room. "What a number of things people seem to be wanting,"

[72] Diminutive for "Pavel" (Paul).

he thought, listlessly looking at the pool of water his wet shoes had left on the floor. "There isn't a thing I am in want of myself. The only one thing which I really do want is—not to live . . ."

Somebody, in slippers, was coming down the passage. The shuffling stopped abruptly, and all was quiet. Evgueny resumed his walk.

"Her dresses were hanging there, on this wall. . . . How nice they smelt. . . . And now there is nothing. . . . They were here, and now they are gone . . ."

He walked from window to door.

"Yes, yes . . . not to live . . . Death will atone for everything. Who will damn the dead? And if anyone does, what does a dead man care?"

For a long time he stood completely empty of thought. Then, all at once, turning to pace back to the window:

"Hideous, all of it!"—he cried out.

Looking through the window, he began watching some hens scratching in a heap of steaming manure in the yard below.

"Germaine was right," he thought. "There is no God—there is nothing. The trap flies open for a second in the darkness of non-existence, there is a flash of light, and that is a man's life. For some it is but half-a-second. That is a man's chance—his fate. When there, in the yard of the Grand Vizier's palace, the heads of the Serbians were clipped off, our own heads might have as easily been added to their number. How afraid of death I was then! And now? . . ." Though he said this to himself, yet he knew how very much afraid of death he still was. His whole being shook and shivered in cold fits of latent terror, at a loss to find anything to catch at to save itself from destruction.

"Even my mother, even she will not grieve for me."

A fit of sudden panic seized him, and he went lurching into a corner of the room. With the hoarse cry of "Help! Help!" escaping from his breast, he flung himself, face downwards, into an arm-chair.

At that very moment, the door leading into the passage began slowly opening, and an old man in carpet slippers and a

gray, red-trimmed dressing-gown with a heavy-tasseled belt, noiselessly entered.

Evgueny turned round and, on seeing the old man, clutched the arms of the chair with both hands and stared. A spectre could not have frightened him more than this heavily breathing old man who seemed to have appeared from nowhere.

XXVI.

THE old man was stout and short, with a big round head and a thick neck. His face was clean-shaven and soft, as though modeled in yellow clay. Gray hair curled on his nape. His forehead and the top of his head were pink. Both face and hands shone with fresh cleanliness. His small eyes with red and slightly swollen lids had a frank, intelligent look.

"Who are you?"

"Young sir, I am no stranger to you. My name is Alexei Ossipovitch Kozodéeff. When you were a boy and came home from school for your holidays, I often saw you at Stepan Fedorovitch Dournoff's house, and you reminded me of my own two sons, who had also been at the Naval Corps, but had finished their education there before you."

"How did you get here?"

"I have been watching you for some time. I am living temporarily in this hotel, and I have had occasion to notice many things. And just now, having been informed by Pavloushka of the unusual state you are in, I have taken the liberty to listen and even to peep through a chink of the door at your extraordinary and unforgivable faint-heartedness."

"Who allowed you to do that? . . . You are no authority over me. . . . I am a nobleman. . . . A free man!" . . . Evgueny cried passionately.

"You do not understand what liberty means. No man or nation is free in this world. God Himself has not willed it to be."

"Why do you say all this to me?" Evgueny interrupted him. "You have nothing to do with me."

"Don't be in such haste, young sir, listen first. Then you will see that I have. True liberty is freedom from the thraldom of your passions, and not the denial of all authority over you. You were frightened at the possibility of temporary dishonor in the eyes of your chiefs, and were preparing for yourself the eternal dishonor of suicide. If you were a truly free man, a nobleman in spirit, and not only in body, you would look for spiritual freedom, freedom from the thrall of your passions. And you—you doubted the very existence of God. You were frightened at the water-spout which came over your miserable earthly dwelling, instead of giving yourself up into the hands of God, and putting your hope in Him."

The kindness that sounded in the old man's words and the attractive neatness of his whole figure, had a soothing effect on Evgueny. He said in a low and dejected voice:

"Ah, you do not know my dreadful fate!"

"I do, young sir. I see that dark forces have taken hold of you and are pushing you to your perdition. But it seems there is someone who prays God fervently for you, and God will not allow you to perish."

"You do not know all."

"Tell me everything," the old man said kindly, yet with authority. "It will do you good."

Bending his head and fixing his eyes on the floor, Evgueny in a tired voice began his confession. It lasted long. He told the old man everything, he told him of his meeting with Germaine in Paris, the wreck of the *Diana,* the prison in Constantinople, his unexpected liberation, his arrival in St. Petersburg, his passion for Germaine, his gambling, the money he had received at the Ministry and then handed over to Germaine and, lastly, his belated awakening to the fact of his having had to to deal with French spies.

"And now," he ended, "I am a deserter who has betrayed the secrets of his country, a dissipator of Crown money, which had been given to me for the salvation of my brothers. I am

guilty before God and before my Sovereign, and I must be judged by men or by God, before Whom I wanted to appear."

Evgueny rose and waited with his head still bent down.

Kozodéeff kept silence for some time, as though trying to think very clearly; and then, in that same kind voice which went to Evgueny's heart, he spoke:

"Your fault, young sir, is one thing in the eyes of man, and quite another before God. God judges a man's faults not by his actions, for they might be committed under coercion. He judges him by his impulses and motives, by the desires that govern his heart. Man is never free in his actions. Man always is in the power of either good or evil. If he lets evil get the upper hand in his thoughts, he falls a prey to the power of darkness. Sinning in mind is a greater sin than sinning in deeds. For it is in man's mind that the heaviest crimes spring up. Man's mind breeds envy and carnal desire. The roots of the only really abominable acts lie in the mind. Was it your intention, when, out of prison, you were on your way to St. Petersburg, to turn traitor to your Sovereign and to your country and become a deserter?"

"No definite thought of that kind entered my mind. I was only tempted to couple my life to that of the woman I loved, so much so that I was even ready to leave my country and follow her to France. But even then, I hoped I would be able to persuade her to remain in Russia. I wanted to make her my wife. I wanted to tender my resignation and settle down in the country exercising my mastership with justice over the peasants who are entrusted to my care."

"That is a good thing to do, and most important. You do not know how important living in the country is nowadays, sir. Having to deal with simple folk is by far not as easy a thing as dealing with educated people. To our peasants, even a favor, if misplaced or prematurely timed, may prove fatal. Prompted by hotheads, they dream of freedom and do not even know what freedom means. The word 'freedom' in itself goes to their heads, for, as in all other classes, there are but few judicious people among them, and the rest are brainless dolts. And they may construe freedom as the license of turning into

beasts. Our peasants are capable of the worst atrocities when drunk. That is what freedom means if granted prior to enlightenment. If anything happened, our peasant would send people's heads rolling with greater ease than did the French in Paris. There is no greater danger than freedom misunderstood. A nobleman is in duty bound to uphold his Sovereign's authority and thereby give our vast empire time to attain, in the natural order of things and without the chaos of riot, culture and civilization, and freedom within the dictates of reason. By settling down on your estate, basing your life on religion and the Gospel, which is still the light of lights, and trying to develop the herd of unreasoning beings entrusted to your care, you would be furthering the work of your Sovereign and the work of God. Why call yourself deserter and traitor? You are not! For, has any of your companions come back yet and resumed his duties in the Fleet both you and they belong to? You have made a blunder, but that won't prevent them from obtaining their liberty. All that it might mean to them would be delay for a few days."

The old man spread wide his arms and shook his head.

"But there it is, I have still been the accomplice of spies," said Evgueny sorrowfully.

"Then I am their accomplice too," said the old man, with a quiet laugh which covered his round face with wrinkles. "I have been living at this hotel already for six weeks, I have even made the acquaintance of Monsieur Gaston. I have hardly stirred out of the house, and so could not help seeing how quill-drivers and all sorts of petty officials of ministries kept running in and out; and I have long ago guessed that somewhere there was something quite wrong."

"Then why did you not let the authorities know? Why did you not warn me they were preparing for evil?" exclaimed Evgueny with passionate reproach.

"He is a free-mason," he thought. "What I have heard people telling me about old Kozodéeff being a free-mason and a Voltairian is quite true."

"Do we know, young sir, where good is and where evil is? You have got it into your head that Napoleon intends to de-

clare war upon us, and that is why you are so afraid of these spies. But my opinion is that the more they know about Russia, the less inclined they will be to attempt war. God is merciful! Napoleon knows quite well from the lesson the last war taught him how dangerous it is to lead his army so far away and risk such resistance. . . . You may be sure he knows, better than you do or I, how many troops and military stores we have all along our frontier. It is not what it was in Wolkonsky's time, when the Army had had nothing to eat. I tell you honestly I do not think the French will dare to attack us, for they have already found out at their cost what Russia is, and have suffered greatly from it. It is rather ourselves who have been trying to find a quarrel with them. And there is no sense in our wishing to fight them,—they live so far away."

"But what if they really have stolen our maps?" Evgueny said gloomily.

"Well, and what if they have? I believe in Napoleon's sound common-sense. When he sees the sparseness of our population, the scantiness and bad condition of our roads, the vast wilderness of land lying waste, and our forests, all desire to conquer us will leave him."

The old man sat down on the bed and looked attentively at Evgueny. Evgueny glanced nervously about the room, avoiding Kozodéeff's eyes. Both were silent for some time. At last Evgueny spoke:

"All this is as it may be;—but there is one thing that cannot be doubted . . . my disgrace. And there is only one way out of it for me."

"Suicide, you mean?"

"Assuredly," Evgueny answered dully.

Another long spell of silence fell between them. To Evgueny the whole world seemed to have grown silent. The noise of the town, the rattle of wheels, the sound of spades and scrapers in the courtyard, the voices of the dvorniks who were cleaning it of the snow, had ceased to reach his ear. He heard only the rasp of the old man's breathing and waited with strained attention.

"Never yet has suicide saved anyone from disgrace. And

in your case, it would serve only to add to your dishonor, for the money would not have been refunded; your duty towards your country and your comrades would still remain unredeemed; your crime would in no way be expiated. No one has the right to deprive a man of his life, not even himself of his own. . . . Keep that well in mind. Would it not be still greater dishonor to you when your mother and sister heard of your shameful death? There is no dastardly act of cowardice worse, and, excuse me, young sir, nothing meaner than committing suicide in the circumstances in which you find yourself. So far nobody knows anything yet, and things still can be mended. But when the news spreads of your cowardly death, the reason that has caused it will be sought for. And then it will be not only you, but your whole family that will be dishonored. It's very foolish! Seek for a means of raising the money you have embezzled, go and deliver your comrades from prison, and don't let yourself be overcome by faint-hearted and cowardly thoughts."

The old man got up, groaning, from the bed on which he had been sitting.

"And now listen, young sir. This is my last word to you: Don't be a fool. Think it well over, and you will see I am right. And for the present . . . Good-bye."

XXVII.

Old Kozodéeff had not changed the trend of Evgueny's thoughts. He had not taught him the chief and most important thing, how and where to obtain the money. Still, he had relieved him of a considerable part of his remorse. Being a deserter and an accomplice in a plot of his country's enemies, the two things Evgueny had been chiefly reproaching himself with had been just as many words written in chalk on a blackboard. That old man, that free-mason, who seemed to know things Evgueny had no knowledge of, had come and had wiped these words off, as it were, with a wet rag. Only the problem

remained of raising the money and carrying out what the Minister had told him to do. This done, it would be possible to go on living and to expiate his past by blameless service.

But hard as he tried, he could not think out a way of obtaining the money. The thought alone of going to his mother and telling her all seemed appalling. And once more he began to think of death. And then: "Where am I to get a pistol?" Suddenly he thought of Kouzma Minaieff. "He will give me one. He will understand. And if he does not, I'll steal one from him." He knew it was absurd, he felt his mind was only temporizing in the hope of finding some exit hidden behind that new spell of respite. But he was afraid to own it to himself.

He looked out of the window. The weather was clearing. It was growing lighter. The snow in the courtyard had been swept into high porous heaps, the large cobble-stones were shining.

"There is a grove of birch trees behind the Cossack Barracks. White snow-drifts must be lying there now. I will get a gun from Kouzma and there, among the white birch trees, on the white snow, with a black hole in my temple, I'll go to sleep forever. I'll be out, at last, of this chamber of torture which is life."

Evgueny found Kouzma and Tiumen lying on their beds, smoking their pipes. Recognizing him at the first sound of his voice, Kouzma threw himself on his neck, almost smothering him in his embrace. Kouzma's retriever kept jumping around them, wagging his tail and barking at the visitor.

"Tout beau, Marat! Tout beau!" Kouzma called out, quieting the dog.

Evgueny noticed at once that Kouzma had grown thinner. He believed he could see a shadow, which had not been there before, in his eyes. But through it happiness shone out of their very depths. Carried away by a wave of that individual happiness, Kouzma forgot to make Evgueny tell him all about himself. Failing even to notice Evgueny's despondency, he

began hurriedly to pour out his heart and tell Evgueny everything about his own self. He spoke disconnectedly, jumping from one thing to another.

"Well, sit down . . . sit down . . . here . . . no, better here, beside me on my bed. . . . You're in civilian clothes, I see. . . . Straight from prison? . . . Maria Alexéevna told me all about it. . . . Heavens! What a fool I am! Tiulentchik[73] there's a deary, run, old boy, and send Skatchkoff to fetch us some champagne. Marat, tout beau! Tiulen, do send that squeeling pig of a dog to the devil. . . . Jenka, my dear fellow! Wish me well! . . . I am engaged. . . . I am going to marry your sister. . . . We shall be brothers. . . . Ah, if you only knew the terrible mess I have been in. I am a useless fellow, a good-for-nothing scamp. . . . And she is a saint, an angel! . . . But wait, I must tell you all in due order. . . . I'll tell you the bad thing first, about that horrible abyss. . . . No, first I must tell you all about how I became engaged. . . . You know I did not dare to risk it. . . . I was afraid. . . . I knew your mother was against our marrying. . . . And then, to make things still worse, came that horror. All hope seemed to have gone. And do you know who came to my aid? That man there—Serbedjab Tiumen. He began by almost ruining everything, but it all came right in the end, thanks to Ataman Platoff. Yes, to the Ataman himself. He was passing here on his way from Turkey, and hey, presto! he had everything arranged. By the way, we are going to march out to the Vistula, one says. War, Jenka, boy, do you hear? A war and a wedding! Everything at once! How glad I am that you have turned up to-day! To-morrow at dawn I am off to the Don to see my father. He is going to give me money to buy a house for Nadenka and myself in Shestilavotchnaia[74] Street. A lovely house. You shall see it. And the wedding is to be after Christmas, in January. Ah, if it were not for that abyss into which I had fallen . . ."

Evgueny sat as he was, in his cloak, deafened by this torrent of words.

[73] Little Tiulen.
[74] The Street of the Six Shops.

"How did it all happen?" he asked with indifference.

Kouzma did not notice his lack of interest.

"Which do you mean? My engagement or the abyss?"

"I don't understand a word," said Evgueny with a note of annoyance. "What abyss?"

"Oh, a dreadful one," sighed Kouzma. "Which shall I tell you about first? About the engagement or the abyss?"

"Oh, leave your abyss alone just yet. Tell me all about your engagement. . . . I may have something to tell you about an abyss myself," said Evgueny, forcing himself to a smile.

The hint Evgueny's words seemed to imply, went past Kouzma unnoticed. Still full of his own self, he jumped up from where he had been sitting, paced up and down the room and stopped at the window.

"This, Evgueny, cannot be told with words, it must be represented. It was so marvelous all of it. Just like in a fairy-tale. Well, listen. At first all was as dark as dark can be. I was down in the dumps, I had lost all pleasure of being alive. You will see later on the reason why. And on the top of it all, I heard that Fofo had redoubled his attentions to Nadenka, had asked her in marriage, and that Maria Alexéevna had given her consent, and Nadenka herself had asked him to wait for her answer. There was no time to lose. . . . 'Come along,' Tiumen said to me. 'I am going to be your envoy.'"

Here Prince Tiumen, who, dressed in a soft green and yellow dressing-gown, had been lolling about on his bed, reminding one of a fat and lazy tom-cat, sat up. He let down his legs and, with a sign of awakening interest, began to listen.

"'You?' I said to him. 'But you know nobody there.' 'All the better,' he said."

"I said to him," began Tiumen in his strong Kalmuck accent. "'I am not just anyone. I am a sovereign Kalmuck Prince. I am the descendant of the famous Dondouk-Ombo. I must be treated with respect. I have decided to act very simply.'"

"All too simply, I am sorry to say," Kouzma said turning to him. "You very nearly ruined the whole thing. Well, I'll go one. 'All right,' I said, 'let us start at once. Go where you

can and die where you must.'[75] And then, this scarecrow here . . ."

"Why scarecrow," interrupted Tiumen. "Why use such foolish words?"

"This charming fellow, I mean,—he goes and gets himself togged out in a golden robe with blue lotus-flowers." . . .

"A sacred robe!"

"He looked just like a village pope. He had dug up a queer looking cap from somewhere, with ear-lappets. I also put on my full dress uniform, my tall-collared dark-blue *tchekmen* with epaulets. I buckled on my sword and threw a cloak over my shoulders. We hired an open carriage and off we went. The people in the streets just stared at us, probably taking us for an embassy from Bokhara. Police officers saluted touching their caps with two fingers as we passed. Well, we arrived at Dournoff's house. Tanka[76] opened the door. She looked at us and I thought she was going to faint with amazement, and then she burst out laughing. 'What do you want?' she said. 'It is not Carnival week you should come dressed up like that.' And then Tiumen, looking very important. . . ."

"Dignified," Tiumen corrected.

"All right,—looking most dignified, he says: 'Go, and tell your mistress that His Serene Highness, the Kalmuck Prince Serbedjab-Tiumen, Lord Master over many *kibitkas*[77] and hordes, has arrived craving an interview with the Russian noblewoman Maria Alexéevna Ogloblin on very urgent business. Now repeat what I said.'"

"Tanka just stares at him with bulging eyes, but she repeats: 'His Serene Highness, the Kalmuck Prince Tiumen, master of many kibitkas with horses, and searcher of a job, wants to see my mistress.' 'All right,' he says, 'no use trying to teach a fool like you. Get you gone and deliver my message just as you can.' It had been arranged between us for him to enter first into the drawing-room. I was to stay behind in the vestibule and prompt him through a chink of the door,

[75] A Russian saying.
[76] Dim for "Tatiana."
[77] Tent-dwellings of the Kirghiz and the Kalmucks.

helping him to get safely through the "révérence d'un jeune homme de bonne famille." [78] We had been going through all the steps beforehand at home. Well, thus we stood and waited. At last we heard footsteps but we could not see through the trellis-screen in the drawing-room who it was. Tanka came running back. 'Come in, please,' she said. At that Tiumen, in his priestly robes, moved forward and shoved himself through the door into the drawing-room. As agreed, I gave the word through the chink of the door: "Avancez."

Serbedjab-Tiumen got up from his bed and began to represent how it had all been.

"Un, deux, trois! Inclinez-vous." [79]

Serbedjab took a step forward, then half-a-step to the right and, with a step backwards, bowed low. At the thought of his mother sitting in the drawing-room and Serbedjab pirouetting before her, Evgueny could not help smiling.

"And then. . . . Oh, I can't any more!" and letting himself sink on the bed, Kouzma burst out laughing.

"And then. . . ." Tiumen went on imperturbably, striking an attitude and giving his features an expression of both respectful deference and slyness, "then I said: 'Madam, you have a mare and I have a fine stallion. Wouldn't you like to have some little colts and fillies? . . . And then, this fellow here comes flying at me and spoils the whole show, the brute!"

"Then . . . " exclaimed Kouzma jumping up from the bed and seizing Tiumen by the collar of his dressing-gown, "I leapt like a tiger into the drawing-room and rushed behind the trellis-screen. O happiness! O bliss! It was not Maria Alexéevna at all, but only Mademoiselle Marjandi who was sitting there, shaking with laughter. And she had not understood a word of what Tiumen had been saying to her, thank God. 'You have spoilt everything, you fool!' I said, dragging him on to the landing. I was mad, I was ready to kill him. I was dragging him down the stairs when, suddenly, I heard a voice coming up from the landing below: 'Hey there, gentlemen. What does this mean?—I'm blessed if it isn't Kouzma Minaieff

[78] "Salute of a young man of good family."
[79] "One, two, three! Bow low."

again? It was altogether too early to let you become an officer, a mad-cap like you. . . ." We looked, and there was Platoff, the Ataman himself. We both pulled ourselves straight and stood at attention, hardly daring to breathe."

Kouzma and Tiumen both showed how they had been standing at attention before Platoff.

" 'What are you treating him like that for?' asks Platoff. I was on the verge of tears. 'Why, he's spoilt everything, confound the man!' I said. And then I told him what kind of wooing it had turned out to be. 'And what does your father say?' I told him my father had long ago given his consent and had even the money ready to buy a house for us. 'And Nadenka herself?' 'Nadenka,' I said, 'as far as I know, is quite willing to marry me, but her mother won't hear of it. She wants her to marry a civil servant of the Archives, Fedor Petrovitch Bereskin. And Nadenka will not dare to disobey her mother.' 'Well, my friend,' says Platoff, 'it shall never be that such trash as a paltry little civilian should cut out a Cossack of the Don. You will come with me. And you too, Prince, I may want you.' He went to the door and gave the bell-handle such a pull that we could hear the bell ring out behind the door. He desired to be announced, and, entering the drawing-room with me, told Tiumen to stay near the door and keep his mouth shut. Your mother, Maria Alexéevna, then came in. When she saw the Ataman and me with him, her face went red all over in spots. 'Ah Ataman,' she said, 'this is indeed an honor.' And one, two! one, two! firmly marking his steps on the polished floor, he marches up to her, and, seizing my hand, whispers: 'Kneel down.' Then, bending one knee himself beside me and jerking his diamond-encrusted sword over his leg, he says: 'Maria Alexéevna, I am here taking the place of his father to this young Cossack, for, by the will of my Emperor, I am father to all the Cossacks of the Don. Give him your blessing for his marriage with your daughter Nadejda.' [80] Maria Alexéevna holds out her hand to Platoff, trying to make him rise. 'What are you doing, your High Excellency?' she says. 'You make me feel quite ashamed.' At that Platoff kisses her

[80] Nadine.

hand in a courtly manner and says: 'I shall not get up before I have a favorable answer from your lips. And if it is not favorable, we shall both appeal to our Empress, Maria Fedorovna, and beg her to intercede for us. I doubt not she will be able to persuade you, for the sake of Platoff, the Cossack, to give in to our prayers.' Here your mother was quite disconcerted. 'Why,' she said, 'My Nadenka is grown up. Let her decide for herself. I am not forcing her to marry against her will. . . . Nadenka,' she called. Nadenka came in. She had very likely heard our voices in the drawing-room, and had apparently been waiting to be called. She wore a white muslin dress. A crimson rose was pinned to her bosom,—the flower of our Life-Guards Cossacks. Her mother said to her in French: 'This is what has happened: Ataman Platoff has come to ask for your hand on behalf of Kouzma Ivanovitch Minaieff. They are waiting for your decision.' Nadenka blushed violently. She grew redder than her rose. 'Maman,' she said. 'I shall not go against your wishes. Whatever you decide, I will obey you. . . . As to me, I am quite willing to marry Kouzma Ivanovitch.' She had no sooner said this than the Ataman sprang to his feet. He seized her hand, thrust it into mine and, turning to your mother, said in a tone of command, as though on a battle-field: 'Give your blessing, Maria Alexéevna, to your daughter's marriage with Cornet Kouzma Minaieff, of the Cossacks Life-Guards. Prince Tiumen, you shall be witness.' Here your mother sighed, Evgueny; she was apparently very much upset, and she left the room, but soon returned with the icon of the Virgin of Unexpected Joy—such a good icon, and so appropriate, too, to the occasion—and she gave us her blessing."

Proud as a peacock, Kouzma walked up and down the room and, stopping before Evgueny, said:

"This is how my wooing took place."

"When did all this happen?" asked Evgueny.

"The day before yesterday. Yesterday there was a family-gathering and presents. To-day I am expected to dinner, and to-morrow I start for the Don, to receive my father's blessing, and also the money he has prepared for us."

"Do they know . . . at home . . . that I am here?" Evgueny asked dully.

"No . . . Antonsky had told Nadenka last week that someone had seen you at some hotel. Dournoff sent an official to inquire at all the barriers of the town, but your name did not appear in any of the registers. Your mother was very much upset at first, but, after, it was put down to false rumor. And then our betrothal came about. . . ."

"Well, Kouzma, are you happy?"

"Happier than you can imagine, Evgueny. The wedding is fixed for January. And if it is true that we are going to take the field and the Guards are moved to the Vistula, I shan't mind going . . . for Nadenka will be mine already."

Suddenly, apparently remembering something, Kouzma said with unexpected gloominess, which was so foreign to his disposition:

"My happiness would be complete, if it were not for one horrible circumstance which casts a gloom on all my joy."

"You are coming to your abyss?" said Evgueny with a wry smile.

"Yes, Evgueny—my abyss. . . . Tiumen, I must ask you to leave the room for a little while."

"I am not a little boy," grumbled Serbedjab.

"No, that you are most certainly not, but you have no business to know this."

"You are always having secrets from me."

"Not always. Simply, there are certain things I must talk over with the brother of my fiancée."

"But where on earth shall I go to?"

"Go to the clerk. Ask him if my leave and my order for post-relays are signed and if the horses are ordered."

Tiumen left the room grumbling to himself.

"He is a good fellow, that Tiumen of yours," said Evgueny with a sigh. "Tell me all about the abyss."

XXVIII.

"You remember Emmotchka Spalte?"

"Of course I do. We used to dance together at our fancy-dress parties. When the *Diana* joined Admiral Seniavin's squadron in the Mediterranean, someone read me a letter from Russia describing your feat of daring. You rode up to the fourth storey to her parents' flat, it appears?"

"Yes, I did. But listen, Evgueny, do not think for a moment that though I did it I was breaking my faith to your sister, even in thought. It was nothing but the desire of showing off before Emmotchka. A bit of a guardsman's foolish bravado. Afterwards I sang duets with her. We were all very intimate friends and full of fun in our set. You had gone away on your cruise and we enjoyed ourselves. We were burning our candle at both ends. We—the officers and myself, I mean—went to hear the Tziganes. . . . We sang. . . . We drank, of course, to. . . . To tell you the truth, I never treated Emmotchka seriously. To me she was just a little rosebud, a little china doll, nice to look at, and that was all. And I never thought at that time, Evgueny, of myself as the man who would make her heart flame up with passionate love that knew no limits. Last spring our squadron was sent to the coast beyond Narva to look out for the English Fleet. We were all bored to death. We stood scattered all along the coast, five or six men to a post. It was a hot summer, we bathed in the sea, we had plenty of good food to eat. I began getting flesh and got overcharged to madness with waste energy. And just then Emmotchka turned up. She had come with the special purpose of finding me, and she settled down in the neighborhood. The devil then began playing his tricks on me. I got entangled with Emmotchka. There was no love on my part. . . . Simply, my blood was up. All my thoughts, I swear, were of Nadenka. Yet entangled with Emmotchka I got, all the same. Thus the whole of the summer passed. She lived quite close to me in a

hired datcha. My guitar was at work, of course, and I kept playing and singing without scenting misfortune.

'Mann und Weib une Weib und Mann
Reichen an die Gottheit an.' [81]

"The summer was drawing to its close, and Emmotchka began to mope. Looking at me with tears in her eyes, she would say in a doleful voice:

'Der Liebe Thränen,
Der Freundschaft Sehnen
Ist alles nicht genug die Vorsicht zu versöhnen,
Der Menschen Werth durch Menschen Todt verhöhnen.' [82]

"Of course I answered with any kind of nonsense that came into my head. I did not stop much to think. But she went carrying on with her dolefulness. And then one day I somehow happened to answer in the same strain:

'Weine nicht, es ist vergebens!
Jede Freude dieses Lebens
Ist ein Traum der Phantasie.
Mühe dich es zu vergessen,
Dass du einst eib Glück besessen:
Denke-du besasst es nie.' [83]

"God, what happened then! She threw herself on her knees before me, she embraced my feet, she looked me straight in the eyes with those two forget-me-not eyes of hers. 'Are you serious, Kouzma?' she said. 'No! It is impossible. You are only joking. You cannot be so cruel'. . . . And at that very moment, as though on purpose, a half-squadron of Cossacks who had been relieved from their post, were marching down

[81] "Man and wife and wife and man
Reach up to divinity."

[82] "The tears of love, the longing of friendship—all this is not enough to propitiate fate. It laughs at man's worth by sending him death."

[83] "Do not weep, it is in vain! All joy is but a dream. Try to forget you ever possessed happiness. Try to think it never was thine."

the road, and the men were singing a song of the Don, the song about the barmaid and her Cossack.

'The barmaid listened to the Cossack's words,
The barmaid mounted on the Cossack's horse,
The Cossack took the barmaid to the forest dark,
The Cossack hanged the barmaid on a fir.'

"To tell you the truth, I was feeling seriously annoyed. 'I am a Cossack,' I said. And, miserable wretch that I am, I must confess I had been thinking of that song. Not exactly in the sense of the words, of course, but in a 'we-are-not-tied-together-for-life' sort of way. She understood at once. She got up and shook her head. 'Are you not ashamed of yourself?' she said. 'Have you no pity for me?' I did not answer. A sudden fit of obstinacy had come over me. She went slowly into the house, looking back at me once or twice as she went. I remained sitting where I was, smiling and deliberately assuming an air of careless indifference. 'If I give in to her,' I thought, 'she will be unmanageable.' "

Kouzma stopped speaking. Evgueny was silent too. Winter dusk was thickening outside, and it was growing dark in the room. Kouzma sighed and said in a low voice:

"You never thought, Evgueny, that I could be such a cad?"

Evgueny did not answer. He sat motionless on Kouzma's bed in the corner, leaning on his elbow against the pillows.

About ten minutes passed. Neither of them broke the silence that reigned in the room. At last Kouzma spoke again:

"The next day she left for St. Petersburg. A week later it began to be stormy on the gulf and we were ordered back to barracks. There was no room in my thoughts for anyone but Nadenka. I heard that Fofo—confound the man—had not given up his intention and that your mother sympathized with his plans. I did not dare to go straightforward to your people. My conscience pricked me for my amorous intrigue of the summer. But I could not resist the wish of trying to let Nadenka know, in one way or another, of my affection. Through Nurse Matvéevna I got to know the days when Nadenka was to be at the theater. I went there beforehand and

placed either a box of sweets or a bunch of flowers, tied with a red ribbon, on her seat. I felt sure Nadenka would guess who they came from. I knew from Nurse that everyone at your house was against me except Nadenka herself. Thus a fortnight went by. One evening, in the second half of September, I was returning home after vespers. Approaching the barracks, I saw that my blind was down and that candles were burning behind it in the room. Serbedjab was away at Pavlovsk with his detachment at that time. I thought someone of my fellow-officers must be there. My orderly looked confused as I entered the vestibule. I opened the door. . . . Emmotchka was sitting at the table, looking very pale. 'Emma Ivanovna,' I said to her. 'What are you doing? How could you come here, to barracks, all alone? You are ruining your reputation.' She answered coldly: 'My reputation does not concern anyone except myself. I have come to clear up how we stand. I have no more strength left in me to bear this any longer.' It was warm in my room, yet there she was sitting in her wadded jacket, wrapped in a shawl of periwinkle-blue, shivering as though with cold. I felt pity for her rising up in me. And I needn't tell you, Evgueny, that once a man begins to pity a woman, it is all over with love. Pity is love's tombstone. 'Tell me,' said Emmotchka, 'tell me as an honest man, do you love me? Ask yourself the question well and tell me.' As though there was anything to ask myself about? I had thought it over a hundred times and I knew that it had never been love, nor even a paroxysm of passion, it had simply been a mistake. . . . I did not answer. Then, in a timid sort of way, she stretched out her hand and put it on mine. 'Why don't you speak?' she said in a hardly audible voice. 'I am prepared to hear the worst.' 'I love another,' I said with difficulty. And then we both were silent again, but I felt her little hand tremble on mine. . . . Every moment I thought she was going to cry. Suddenly she said to me: 'Give me some tea. I am feeling cold.' I own I was glad of this opportunity of bustling about. My orderly had his samovar going. I brought her some tea, but I had nothing else to offer her, in my bachelor's household, except

bread. 'Emma Ivanovna,' I said, 'excuse me for the scantiness of your tea. I did not expect you.' She did not say anything and began to sip her tea. But her lips were twingeing and her hands were shaking. 'Do you understand,' she said, 'that you have ruined me for life?' I was silent and shrugged my shoulders. And then, hesitatingly, she said: 'You ought to marry me . . . if you . . .' she broke off, but I understood that she had meant to say: 'If you are an honest man.' I said: 'I did not wish this to happen. It just came about, it has all been my fault, of course. I cannot expect you to forgive me,'—'I am to blame,' said Emmotchka. And again for a long time neither of us spoke."

Kouzma took a deep breath.

"There I was, standing before her, trying not to look at her, and staring at the floor. At last, in a very quiet voice, she said: 'And so, once and for all you will not marry me?' I did not say a word in answer and did not dare to raise my eyes. I summoned all my courage and said to myself: 'I must be honest, I must not lie to her or to myself.' Then firmly I said: 'Emma Ivanovna. I shall not marry you. I *cannot* marry you. I am a Cossack, and you are a German, a Lutheran. How could I take you home, to my father's house, to our *stanitza.*[84] You do not know our customs. My father will never give me his blessing for such a marriage. And my commanding officer, too, would refuse his permission. . . .' My answer apparently struck her like a thunderbolt. Even the color left her face. 'I see,' she said. 'Then there is nothing else left to me but to die.'—'Don't, Emma Ivanovna,' I cried out, in spite of my struggle to be quite impersonal. It was hellish, Evgueny. I felt like a monster. 'You want to go on the stage. No one there will condemn you for things of the past. And besides, nobody knows.'—'My heart knows . . .' she said. And then, as if ashamed of having displayed her sorrow, quickly added, almost gaily: 'Never mind. I want you then to promise me one last request. After that, I shall not try to see you ever again. To-morrow is Sunday. Come to Sosnovka, beyond Less-

[84] Large Cossack village.

noyé,[85] to the pine forest. I'd like to go for a walk with you for the last time before we part for good. Please believe I shall not annoy you.' 'Better not, Emma Ivanovna,' I said. 'It is all I ask of you,' she insisted. I promised her I would. Then I went out to get her a cab. When I returned I saw her putting something hurriedly into her hand-bag."

Kouzma was pacing up and down the room. Suddenly stopping in front of Evgueny, who was sitting silently on the bed, he asked him simply:

"You did not think I could be such a cad. . . . a low, stupid, seducer. . . . It is all so horrible . . . so unnecessary!"

"I do not see how anyone in your place would have acted differently."—replied Evgueny.

"Then all are cads!" said Kouzma, violently. "Listen:

"The weather was overcast on Sunday. Rain had set in in the morning. However I set out on horseback alone, as had been agreed, in ample time to be at Sosnovka by two o'clock. I arrived there half-an-hour before the appointed time. I had no difficulty in finding the path which leads into the pine trees. I could see no cab waiting anywhere near. Apparently, Emma was not yet there. I dismounted, tied my horse to a tree and went down toward a pond just within the wood. And there I immediately saw Emmotchka. She was sitting at the very edge of the water, leaning her back against a pine tree. She was wrapped in the same shawl of periwinkle-blue she had been wearing when she had come to see me the day before. She heard the tinkle of my spurs as I was approaching and looked up. Her face was pale, and her large eyes looked like burning coals. She was beautiful; but there was something that frightened me. Her bag was beside her, and the first thing I noticed was the handle of a pistol sticking out of it. I knew at once that she had taken it from my room when I had gone out to fetch the cab. 'I believed,' she said, putting both hands on my shoulders, 'you would not fail me. You are honest in the face of death . . . although you may not be so in life.' 'What are you talking of?' I said. 'Let us have done

[85] A forest in the neighborhood of St. Petersburg, where there was an Agricultural Institute and also summer-houses for hire.

with it in peace, Emma Ivanovna. For God's sake, if it is impossible to forgive me, . . . do try to understand me. For what damage I have caused, I am ready to pay all. . . .' I wish you had heard the cry she gave at that. 'Don't dare to talk to me like that,' she cried out. 'It is not for this I invited you to come here, and it is not this I demand of you.' She snatched the pistol out of her bag, and holding it out to me, said tonelessly: 'There . . . shoot me first, and then shoot yourself. I can't do it. Do you hear? Be honest. If you cannot marry me here on earth, be my husband in heaven. We shall appear before God together. He will be our Judge.' There was not a single soul about. The black pond below was all adribble with the falling rain drops. The wind was moaning in the tops of the pines. I felt utterly helpless. I looked at her and saw that she was beyond herself. I tore the pistol out of her hands and threw it away. 'You dare not?. . . . You are afraid?' she sneered, bitterly. I took her by the waist and made her sit down under a pine tree. 'Listen to me, Emma Ivanovna,' I said severely. 'Why should we die? You are young and so am I. Neither of us knows what is still in store for us? There might be many a man to whose happiness your life may be indispensable. And as to myself, I am not free to dispose of mine. We are on the eve of a war. My life belongs to my Sovereign. Suicide is a great sin. My faith even forbids the burial of a suicide according to the rites of the church. A suicide is put away like a dog, without cross or incense.' I could not tell you exactly, Evgueny, what else I told her, but she had apparently not been listening at all. When I had finished, she pressed close to me and said tenderly: 'Well, if it is like that, forgive me. You may be right.' 'What have I to forgive you?' I replied. 'It is for myself to ask forgiveness and spend my days praying for your happiness.'—'You must forgive me,' she said, 'for having doubted you. I thought it was simply cowardice on your part.' 'That is of no account,' I said, 'don't let us speak of it any more.'—'Will you really pray for me?'—'I shall, Emma Ivanovna. I shall pray that God and yourself may forgive me.' She did not answer. She sat there as though mute. For an age we sat there, with no one about

in the forest and only the trees whispering and moaning all around. Dusk was coming. Wisps of mist were rising here and there. Emmotchka was looking into the dark water. 'Look, Vorontchik has got loose!' she suddenly cried out, getting up. And fool that I was, I jumped up and ran up the hill toward where I had tied Vorontchik. I had gone no more than thirty steps when I saw the horse standing quiet where I had left him, with his bridle tied to the tree. A stab of pain went through my heart. I turned round. Emmotchka had vanished. Only her umbrella and her blue shawl were lying on the ground. The water of the pond was moving in ever widening circles. I felt I was losing my head. . . . I ran back. Tearing off my shako and my tunic as I ran, I kicked off my boots and jumped into the water. I had but one thought: to drag her out alive. . . . Then I would give myself up entirely to her. I dived and remained a long time under water. I searched groping about in the tangle of roots and weeds. I found nothing. . . . I swam up for a moment, took breath and dived again. But all in vain. I felt exhausted. I climbed out onto the shore, shaking all over. It had grown quite dark. At last I dressed and rode home. What could I do? Who could I call? It was too late to save her. Three days after, I read in the Petersburg *News* that peasants had found a woman's shawl and bag on the bank of the pond at Sosnovka. The bag had contained a note: 'Blame nobody for my death. Dear little mother, darling brother, I die loving you. *Dass du einst ein Glück besessen, denke, du besasst es nie.*' Fate alone is to blame. I pray to God to forgive me, Emma Spalte.'

"I heard that the pond had been dragged. The body was not found. Only five days later it came to the surface of the water and was buried in the pine forest, not far from the pond, by order of the police. It had not been possible for her mother and brother to be back from Kappel in time for the funeral. Only our usual set of young people were present. I had not the courage to go and excused myself on the plea of illness, and, indeed, I was laid up in bed with fits of cold fever for three days, and for weeks after I was not myself. I could see nothing

but her pale face and blue eyes, as I had seen them for the last time. And at night I would dream that I was diving in the depths of the pond, and her white hands were clutching at my throat, not letting me rise to the surface. Returning home from duty in the evening, I always imagined I would find the candles burning behind my blind and Emmotchka waiting for me. I scarcely dared to open the door for fear I might see her sitting there and hear her say she had come for my answer. I got quite pale and thin during that time. My comrades put it down to my hopeless love for Nadenka. And in a way this was true. Day and night I was tortured with the thought that I dare not rise to light and happiness out of that abyss.

"However, time went by and gradually I began calming down. A fresh contingent of young Cossacks arrived from the Don. People were talking of war with Napoleon. The Cossacks had brought me a letter from my father. He sent me his blessing for my marriage with Nadenka and wrote to tell me to start at once, without losing a moment, for our stanitza, as soon as my offer had been accepted, and get the money he had prepared for buying a house for us. There was no more room for hesitation. War was impending. Further delay was impossible. The rest you know. You see now, Evgueny, out of what a depth of misery, out of what a terrible abyss I have come to my great happiness."

"Have you finished?" asked Evgueny. "Is that all?"

"Yes."

Evgueny forced a laugh.

"My dear Kouzma," he said. "I don't see yet where your abyss comes in. You haven't really the slightest idea of what abysses are and how deep they can be. You are wrong to take it so much to heart. You are not to blame. . . . You did not seek her love nor did you try to obtain it by anything you did. It was she herself who was seeking you out. People would not condemn you even if they knew. And God, Who sends you my sister in marriage, shows that He has forgiven you. But why waste words? Better listen to what I am going to tell you, then you will look into an abyss. I am sure

that, when you have heard me out from beginning to end, you will hand me your pistol yourself and say: 'Go ahead, blow out your brains.'"

XXIX.

It had grown quite dark in the room, and Evgueny did not see Kouzma's face.

"Your abyss!" Evgueny went on with the same forced laugh. "Where is the abyss, I should like to know. Had you promised to marry her? No. Did you swear you loved her? No. . . . A pretty girl simply happened to come your way who did not think twice to throw herself on your neck, and you are no monk. That is all."

"But her death?" Kouzma said in a hollow voice.

"She herself asked to put her death to nobody's blame. Her death is her own sin, not yours. . . . No, Kouzma, you better listen to what I have to tell you."

Evgueny got up from the bed on which he had been sitting, brusquely threw off his cloak and, assuming a tragical pose, he said in a sepulchral tone:

"Kouzma, the man you see standing before you is a deserter from the Russian Navy, a traitor who has betrayed state secrets to the enemy, an embezzler of money belonging to the Crown."

"Stop playing the fool, Evgueny," said Kouzma seriously. "There are things that must not be said even in fun!"

"I am not joking," said Evgueny. "Do you know when I arrived here, in St. Petersburg, from Constantinople?"

"When?"

"Antonsky was quite right saying that I had been seen at one of the hotels of the town. I have already been here for a whole week, and only yesterday I reported to the Minister."

Evgueny began by telling Kouzma the first part of his story, about Paris, the storm and how he had got out of Constantinople. He could not see Kouzma's face, but from some of his movements, from the way he got up several times and then sat

down again on his seat near the window, Evgueny could easily guess at the impression his tale was making.

"You did wrong, Evgueny. You did very wrong!" Kouzma said in a pained and low voice, when Ogloblin had stopped speaking.

"And what ought I to have done, can you tell me?" said Evgueny with sudden irritation.

"In the first place, you ought not to have gone from Constantinople without your comrades. It is not right to forsake one's friends in distress. And then, once you did go, you ought not to have been running after that French girl, but gone straight to the Minister to ask for help for your comrades."

"It is easy to condemn," said Evgueny, viciously.

"I do not condemn. How can I, when God only knows what a sin I have committed. But the thing I cannot understand is how you, precisely you, could have acted in this way."

"And yet I have. . . . I was suddenly struck blind. I forgot all things on earth."

"There are many things a man may forget, but he never may forget what is due to his Sovereign."

"Well then, on item one of the indictment—found guilty," . . . Evgueny said with a sneer.

"Don't, Evgueny. Are you not ashamed? I am neither a provost-marshal nor an assessor in a court-martial. In your place I might have done things worse still than that."

"Do you know what old Kozodéeff said to me? He gave me an all round acquittal. But I did not accept it. And so here I am to make a full confession to you and then put myself to death."

Evgueny told Kouzma all Kozodéeff had said trying to calm him.

"Kozodéeff? . . . Humph, Kozodéeff is a free-mason," said Kouzma.

"Well, and what if he is?"

"Oh, nothing, but free-masons generally are such a queer lot of people . . . " said Kouzma evasively.

"Do you know that the Emperor himself is a free-mason? So is Count Vielgorsky. And so are many of those who belong

to the Emperor's nearest entourage. Souvoroff himself was one."

"All that may be as you say," Kouzma said dryly. "I do not allow my thoughts to dwell on it. I am not clever enough for that. But I must say that, on second thought, as regards your case, that man Kozodéeff may be right after all. A deserter is a man who runs away from service, but you ran away from unlawful captivity. You must forgive me, I was too rash accusing you. . . . You are not to blame for having got into captivity, nor for having found a means of getting out of it."

"All right. But you can never wash a nigger white. You only know the beginning. Those French people and Germaine Réville herself turned out to be spies, and I, although I did not realize it then, became their accomplice."

Incoherently continuing his tale, Evgueny gave Kouzma a rambling account of his suspicions and the inferences he had made from certain facts.

"And of that too, Kozodéeff absolved me," he said.

"Well, Evgueny, you really did not know."

"I did not know, but I ought to have guessed. Only a blind man could have failed to suspect. How many times did Germaine make me take her to the cartographic establishment. And those perpetual conversations about maps. . . . How they were printed, and who printed them, and where they were kept? It is impossible to tell all the symptoms which anyone else would have noticed. No, Kouzma, I had allowed love to make a captive of me. But even this is not all. Yesterday I received fifty thousand rubles from the Minister, which I was to take to Constantinople and pay as a ransom for my comrades who had remained in prison. I lost this money at cards. I mean, I used it to pay a gambling debt. A gambling debt to French spies I placed above the freedom of my comrades! . . . More than that . . . I intended fleeing to France. . . . Listen, Kouzma. If, by straining a point here and there, I might be absolved of all the rest, this is disgrace that cannot be pardoned or explained away. For that there is no way open but the way to death. . . . It has grown dark. It is just the time to do it. . . . If you want to act as a true friend, Kouzma, you will

lend me your pistol, . . . now. I shall go outside a ways . . . Give me your hand . . . good-bye."

Evgueny took a step in the darkness towards Kouzma, who was standing in a corner of the room.

"Well? You can't?" said Evgueny hoarsely.

The heavy breathing of the two young men was distinctly audible in the silence of the room. It was a dark-blue night outside. Large drops of water kept dropping from the eaves and fell with frequent tinkling splashes into the puddles underneath.

"You can't?" Evgueny repeated bitterly.

"Evgueny, this is no way out," Kouzma said at last in a muffled voice.

"There is no other possible way, I tell you."

"There is, and it lies through expiation. You have sinned, Evgueny, not so much against yourself as against your fellowmen and against your Emperor. By taking your own life, you would only make your sin twofold."

"It's just what Kozodéeff said all over again. Am I to think, then, that you, too, are a free-mason?"

"No, I am not a free-mason. It is not meet for a Life-Guards Cossacks to be a free-mason. But I judge as my father taught me to judge. And Souvoroff taught my father. What Souvoroff said stands sacred, whether he was a free-mason or not."

"Then you think that Souvoroff would have absolved me?"

"No, Souvoroff would never have absolved you. But still less would Souvoroff have justified suicide. You have committed a crime. You must expiate it by some great service to your Emperor. All shows that we are going to have war. Cover yourself with glory, and all will be weighed over and revalued, and your conscience will be clear once more. Any man may have sinned. Our Ataman Platoff himself committed errors in his youth. There must have been reasons, I presume, why he was confined in the Fortress and then banished to Kalouga . . ."

"Oh, those were days when people could be arrested and exiled for no reason at all," said Evgueny.

But Kouzma did not seem to hear.

"And now, look how respected by everybody he is," he went on. "If you have slipped—get up. And don't slip again. Your crime is an abyss, but you can still climb out of it, but suicide is a bottomless pit which keeps you forever. A fine sort of hero, indeed—a man who blows out his brains—does away with his own life! Anyone can do that. Even poor little Emmotchka could, and she did it. But she was a weak, faint-hearted girl, and you may be a man. Do you want to follow her example?"

"But what shall I do, Kouzma? You must understand. . . . For keeping what has happened from leaking out, I must have money. . . . Fifty thousand. . . . Now, at once. . . . And tomorrow I must start for Odessa. Otherwise there will be a public scandal. . . . And then it will be too late to do anything."

It was quite dark in the room.

Suddenly Kouzma put his arm round Evgueny's shoulders and, holding him tight, he began to speak in a low and heartfelt voice:

"Money. . . . What is money? Just a perishable bubble. Money can be acquired again. The chief thing is, a man's conscience—to keep it clear. Eleven years ago, Vania and I were still children. Our father brought us to St. Petersburg. We put up at these barracks. On the day of our arrival, Souvoroff was buried. Father went to the funeral, and afterwards often went to the Alexandro-Nevsky Lavra to pray on his grave. I remember it all so well. Early morning. . . . The bells have not yet rung for early mass. It is spring. The rays of the sun fall slanting on the wall. In his wide trousers, father sits down on a chair. He bids us stand up side by side in front of him, and then he makes us listen to the principles Souvoroff had been following himself and propounding to others all his life. Father's words have remained in my memory forever. 'Perish yourself, but help a friend to get out of trouble.' And in your case, it is not even a question of perishing. Only a question of money. And money is smoke. We have been talking enough. Let us go at once to your mother. She must see you are back, but when you tell her about yourself, keep your counsel. She will give us a good dinner. She will kill the

fatted calf for the prodigal son, as is said in the Scriptures. You will change there into your sailor's clothes. You will surely find some old uniform of yours at home. And to-morrow, at dawn, we are off together for the Don. It makes no difference to you to go to Odessa by the Voronej highroad instead of taking the Little-Russian one. You shall come with me to the Veshenskaia,[86] where my father lives. He will give me the money he has prepared for buying a house for Nadenka and myself. It is exactly fifty thousand I asked him for. I'll give you that money, and you will go straight to Odessa and Constantinople, to pay your comrades' ransom and get them out of prison. And then, that war may come, and you will expiate your sins, and I shall always know how to obtain what I need for my wife."

"Kouzma . . ." began Evgueny. Tears were choking him. "Great God! . . ."

He was not able to continue. There was a stamping of feet, intentionally loud, in the vestibule. The door opened wide. The yellow light of four candles poured into the darkness of the room, flooding the walls, blinding the eyes and lighting up the agitated faces of the two young men.

XXX.

MARAT walked in front, with a firm and masterful step, tail upright like a stick and paws all muddy. He was followed by Serbedjab-Tiumen with two heavy bronze candelabra, while orderly Skatchkoff came in the rear of the procession, carrying an iron tray on which were champagne-glasses and an uncorked bottle with white foam running down its golden top.

"Look here, Kouzma," said Serbedjab, placing the candelabra upon the table. "I wanted to drink your health late in the evening, at the Tzigane's or at Ekaterinenhof. But once you

[86] Name of the stanitza or large Cossack village where old Minaieff lived.

are with your fiancée, there will be no getting you back from there. So I decided to drink your health and Evgueny's now."

He solemnly handed them the champagne-glasses. In his dressing-gown, with his round face and his eyes askew, Serbedjab stood in the middle of the room and declaimed:

"Good-bye, faithful comrade. When you have gone, who will teach Tiumen to be wise? Who will teach Marat new tricks? Doggie," he called to Marat. "Doggie, laugh! You know," he said turning to Evgueny, "Marat can do anything. Marat can put out a candle with his paw. He can bring you your slippers. But Marat doesn't like wine. Look, what a wry face he makes. We poured some down his throat once."

"You see, Evgueny, how comfortably we live. We even have a dog," said Kouzma.

"We also lived well on the *Diana*. We had a cat called Poushok, a thorough-bred Cronstadt tom-cat. The sailors didn't forsake him even in captivity. They had a bad time of it. They stood in the Vizier's courtyard waiting to be executed. Yet they managed to keep Poushok alive."

"Oh, a cat. . . . That's all right for a woman. A dog is a different thing altogether," said Kouzma.

"A cat is easier to keep on a ship than a dog, your Honor," Skatchkoff joined in the conversation.

"Skatchkoff, is the carriage ready?" asked Kouzma.

"It is at the door, your Honor."

"Then let's be off, Evgueny."

"Take me with you," whined Serbedjab. "You know you promised you would, Kouzma. This is your last evening before starting for the Don."

"Impossible, my dear fellow. Circumstances have changed. I am taking the prodigal son home to his mother. She is sure to faint when she sees him. There will be Ohs and Ahs and questions without end. The new Sinbad will have to tell them his tale. You would be in the way, Tiulen. Don't be angry."

"I should sit quietly in a corner. . . ."

"No, forgive me, Tiulen, but I can't take you with me to-day."

"That's always your way. When you are in trouble, I am

'Prince,' I am 'Serbedjab,' I am 'Tiumen.' But when you don't need me any more, than you call me Tiulen. I know what a tiulen is. It's a sea-dog."

But Kouzma was not listening to his grumbling. He dressed and went out into the street with Evgueny.

"You are in civilian clothes, Evgueny," he said, casting a glance at Evgueny's shabby suit and cloak. "Wait till you don your naval uniform, your epaulets and dagger; you'll feel a different man altogether. It doesn't suit you to be dressed as a civilian. Even our soul is different when we have our uniform on. I am sure nothing of all this would have happened if you had worn your uniform in Paris."

"Don't, Kouzma," whispered Evgueny, squeezing his hand hard. "Don't let us talk of that."

After the lighted room, it was quite dark in the street.

"Be careful, Evgueny, don't stumble. . . ."

"My sight is troubled. . . . I am probably tired. And my legs are weak."

Skatchkoff brought out a lighted candelabrum. The horses' heads loomed out huge in its light. But the damp warm wind blew the candles out immediately and the darkness seemed denser still. Kouzma took Evgueny carefully by the arm.

"This way, Evgueny."

The carriage bent and creaked under the weight of the two men. Evgueny felt the pleasant coolness of the wind on his burning face.

"Who's on the box," asked Kouzma. "Ilia, is it?"

"Ilia Arjanovskov."

"Drive to town. . . . To the Quay. . . . To the Ogloblins."

"I know. . . ."

The horses splashed softly in the wet snow mixed with sand. The iron rims of the wheels creaked on the stones. The reflection of the lighted window disappeared on the snow. Serbedjab had probably put out the candles and gone to bed to sleep away his disappointment. The ruts of the trampled road were dimly visible between the two sheets of snow on either

side. The tops of the trees in the invisible forest rustled and murmured.

Evgueny inhaled the fresh air with delight. The champagne he had drunk on an empty stomach made his head slightly swim and the blood rush to his temples. He had the feeling that all that had happened to him was slowly vanishing away into a distant mist and the high wall which had risen up between him and his former life was disappearing, like some noiselessly rolled up scenery in a theater.

The lights of a double row of street lamps appeared, shining like so many glow-worms in the mist and meeting in a distant angle.

"Kouzma, is this the Télejnaia?"

"Yes."

"Kouzma, the Lavra is not far from here. . . . Shall we stop on our way?"

Kouzma understood what Evgueny meant and gave his cold hand a squeeze under the apron of the carriage.

"He taught you to act as you do. . . . His teachings saved me. Let us pray on his grave. Let us ask him for further guidance in life," sighed Evgueny. "If we could only dare to hope to become some day like those heroes of his?"

"God will help us, Evgueny."

PART THREE

I.

THE house in the Shestilavotchnaia, not far from the Cossack Barracks, which Kouzma had discovered, set his heart upon and bargained for in the days of his jealousy of Fofo, had been no unimportant factor in cementing his newly won happiness.

Kouzma had spoken of this house to Maria Alexéevna and Nadenka on the very evening of his engagement, and on the following day Maria Alexéevna, Nadenka, Dournoff and Kouzma had been to inspect it. It was a very handsome house, built by a merchant named Skorokhodoff for his own use, but he had become bankrupt and now the house was on sale for debt. It was two-storeyed, built of stone, stuccoed and painted pale pink, and had white columns on its facade. On the first floor was a balcony with a wooden railing of bottle-shaped balusters. The house looked out on the Shestilavotchnaia, a quiet unpaved street with tall fences and gardens, and in its own garden there were ancient oak and lime-trees, a summer-house and a thick growth of lilac and jasmine bushes and honeysuckle. Currant, gooseberry and raspberry bushes grew along the wooden fence that surrounded it. Just now, in winter, naked and covered with snow, everything looked rather wild and neglected, but Nadenka somehow liked it all the better. A tall, slender fir tree with spreading branches grew right in front of her future bedroom windows. It was so sumptuously arrayed in a mantle of ermine, and stood out so picturesquely against a background of gray sky, that Nadenka could not take her eyes off it and mentally called it "her friend."

"A fine house," said Maria Alexéevna as she walked across the parquet floor, which boasted a handsome inlaid design in the drawing and dining-rooms.

"Very fine indeed," echoed Dournoff.

They inspected the cellars, sheds, and stables. All was in order, brand-new and still smelling of fresh paint, white-wash and putty.

After inspecting everything, they made the round of furniture-shops, cabinet-makers and upholsterers, and walked right down the row of shops in the *Gostinoi-Dvor*.[1] Maria Alexéevna and Nadenka looked at stuffs, furniture-trimmings, tassels, wall-papers and furniture, mentally arranging the future rooms and deciding which were to be in the modern Empire style and which in antique Louis XV or Louis XVI. They called to mind the furniture in that part of the Winter-Palace which was called the "Hermitage", where was the boudoir of the Dowager Empress Maria Fedorovna with its wide, low armchairs and the mellow, faded colors of the tapestry which were so pleasing to the eye.

Towards the evening of that day Maria Alexéevna began to feel quite reconciled to the idea of her daughter marrying a Cossack. "A Cossack," she thought, "but a man of means. A Cossack, but a Petersburg Cossack and a Guardsman. . . . And he certainly is very good-looking, kind, amiable and obliging." She was even inclined to forgive him his bad French. There was yet another reason for her condescension. Nadenka's marriage and her settling down in a house of her own would leave her mother entirely free to order her own life as she liked, and of late this thought had begun to appeal to her very strongly.

As to Nadenka herself, this house and the independent life she was going to lead in it enhanced her anticipations of the future in a new and unexpected way. To her imponderable and subtle love for Kouzma was now added something very ponderable. The marriage which was approaching would bring a new freedom. She already saw herself as the mistress of a large house and thought of the receptions, dinners and evening-parties she would give. The fact that, when appealed to as to

[1] Arcades with rows of shops forming a square which ran along the Nevsky and three other streets. In the inside part of the square were store-rooms.

the choice of furniture or stuffs, Kouzma invariably answered: "Just as you like, Nadenka," or: "Nothing is too dear if it pleases you," or again: "It is a custom with us Cossacks, to spoil and pamper our wives," was very pleasant and seemed to prognosticate that she would be mistress in her own house.

On the following day Kouzma, who had promised to come about two hours before dinner, in order to go for a drive on the Quay, was late and only made his appearance towards evening. Nadenka felt inclined to be hurt and her pink eyelids were already slightly swollen, but she had no occasion to show offence. Kouzma unexpectedly brought Evgueny with him; and all offences were forgotten.

After dinner they all sat very late in the trellised conservatory, listening to Evgueny's tale of shipwreck and imprisonment in Constantinople. At first Maria Alexéevna was very much upset on hearing that Evgueny was obliged to leave the next morning with Kouzma by order of the Minister, who had entrusted him with a very important mission, but finally its very importance brought her resignation, and she blessed him and Kouzma repeatedly with the sign of the cross.

After the departure of the young men the days flew by imperceptibly.

The Petersburg season was in full swing. New plays were staged at the theatre. Nadenka enjoyed her position as an affianced bride. It seemed to her that she was in some way above and superior to her friends Sophie, Annette and Barbe. She felt herself envied. She had already chosen her bridesmen.[2] It was decided that her brother Evgueny, Fofo, who seemed to accept his defeat and often visited the Ogloblins now, Count Panin, who was a *Chevalier-garde*,[3] and Evreinoff, of the Izmailoff Regiment, would attend the bride at her wedding.

"Maman," said Nadenka to her mother, "won't it be nice? A sailor in black and gold, simple and elegant; a civilian—I shall

[2] At a Russian wedding, both the bride and the bridegroom have several men standing behind them during the ceremony, who hold the crown over their heads, relieving one another, as this crown is very heavy.

[3] Horse-guard.

ask Fofo to wear a dark-blue swallow-tail coat and pale-yellow trousers, with a white embroidered waistcoat. Then a *Chevalier-garde* in red uniform with silver lace, and an officer of the Izmailoff Regiment with red facings. I know that Kouzma's groomsmen will be fellow-officers of the Life-Guards Cossacks and his brother Vania, of the Ataman Regiment, if he can manage to obtain leave from Moldavia."

The bride was to be given away by Dournoff.

Everything had been well thought out and arranged beforehand.

In the morning they shopped, sketched designs for the furniture and discussed prices. Kouzma himself was to order things definitely on his return. He had even said on leaving: "Dear Maria Alexéevna, do not order anything without me. Wait till I return. Then we can do everything. Anything might happen. I like to pay on the nail for what I order."

He had looked sideways at Evgueny as he said this, as though fearful of being overheard.

When they did not go shopping, Nadenka and Mademoiselle Marjandi walked along the Quay and looked at the fine horses trotting past them on the smooth snow. Winter had set in with light frosts. The pale-blue sky with its curtain of long clouds stretching above the horizon, shone over the Neva. Voices sounded clearly in the morning air.

Dournoff sometimes took Nadenka for a drive along the Neva in a low sledge to which one of his trotters was harnessed. There was a healthy smell of frosty snow, of horses' sweat and harness leather. Nadenka felt her cheeks growing firmer and burning like fire, and the frost nipped her little ears. The smooth snowy road lay in front, and her head swam from the rapid motion.

Happiness was calling, and life rose before her like a cloudless sky.

Kouzma returned from the Don in mid-December, bringing handsome presents for his fiancée:—an antique sash sewn with

pearls, Cossack fashion, a silken Cossack *koubeliek*[4] with pear-shaped pearl buttons, such as had been worn by his great-grandmother, an ataman's wife, bright-colored Turkish carpets, a smoked sturgeon, a barrel of caviar, and another containing salted grapes.

After the first joyful excitement of the meeting was over, Nadenka hinted at the purchase of their house. Kouzma did not answer and changed the conversation. This happened a second and a third time. It was clear that he avoided the subject. The title-deeds had to be signed, the furniture ordered, and workmen hired. Yet Kouzma would walk in with Serbedjab-Tiumen and play the fool all day long.

He did not mention the money. Either his father had not given it to him, or else he had lost it . . . or, may be, the whole matter of the house had been bluff on his part? The Ogloblins did not know what to make of it. At last Maria Alexéevna, having decided to clear up this delicate question, began by telling her daughter to have a serious talk with her fiancé about it.

"Ask him straight out what it all means, Nadenka? Your engagement is not widely known. We have only mentioned it to our friends. If it turns out that he has lied, that cannot be forgiven. It would mean that he is not to be trusted. I should break off the match in that case, even though I have given my consent and my blessing. One can't begin life by deceit. If Kouzma's behavior is like that before marriage, what will it be after? I have always said that he is but a Cossack. What can one expect of him?"

In the evening, behind that very same trellis of artificial vine where Serbedjab had made his famous speech to Mademoiselle Marjandi, Nadenka sat on the deep sofa with gilt back and legs, preparing to begin this unpleasant conversation.

Kouzma had settled down on a pile of cushions at her feet, with his legs in wide pleated trousers of fine Crimean cloth, crossed under him Kalmuck fashion. He looked at Nadenka languorously out of his large, dark, melting eyes. He took her delicate little hand in his own strong ones and examined each

[4] A long, tight-fitting dress buttoned in front and mostly dark-colored, worn in ancient times by Cossack women.

small finger, giving each one a caressing name and kissing it. Nadenka laughed constrainedly, snatching her hand away and dreading the coming explanation.

"That will do . . . that's enough, Kouzma."

At last she managed to take both hands away and, with eyes downcast, began to speak.

"I must talk to you about something very important, Kouzma."

She did not see his face, but she felt that he was looking at her fixedly and this troubled her still more.

"Kouzma. . . . Tell me the truth. . . . What does it all mean?"

She was repeating her mother's words, not finding any of her own. But Kouzma did not seem to understand what she was hinting at.

"I don't understand you, my darling. . . . What is it you want to say?" he asked tenderly.

"I wanted to ask you . . . but for heaven's sake don't think me mercenary. Maman says. . . . She is very anxious. . . . There is so little time left until Christmas. . . . Well, it is about the house. . . . It's time to sign the title-deeds. . . . Maman says we must hurry. And you have said nothing. What does it mean? Has your father refused to give you the money?"

Nadenka's blue eyes filled with tears and she whispered in a barely audible voice:

"Or, may be, you have already bought the house?"

She bent her head still lower, afraid to raise her eyes to Kouzma, who had now got up from his seat on the cushions.

"No," Kouzma said in a low but firm voice. "I have not bought the house. . . . And I am not going to buy it."

"Your father has refused to let you have the money?"

"No. . . . Father is always true to his word. He has kept his promise. He counted out fifty thousand and gave them to me. 'Good luck to you,' he said, 'but remember, Kouzma, that it is not money that brings happiness.'"

"Then what is the reason, Kouzma?"

Nadenka felt utterly disconcerted.

"I have not got this money. I cannot tell you what I have

done with it, Nadenka, I haven't the right to tell you. I have given my word to be silent. But I have no money, except a small sum Grandmother gave me for the journey."

"You won't even tell *me* your secret?"

Nadenka raised her head with a decided gesture. Her blue eyes were dry, her hands were clenched and dropped on her knees. She saw before her Kouzma's face, firm, sunburnt and ruddy, with its small moustache, and this face wore a serious and stern expression.

"No, I will not," Kouzma said firmly.

"Very well, Kouzma," said Nadenka in a low voice. "But in that case—forgive me, but I must take back my word. There can be no secrets between husband and wife, and if you want to begin our life together by a secret . . . even by deceit, it is best not to begin it at all."

"It is not my secret. It concerns another person and I have no right to reveal it. As to deceit. . . . I was not deceiving you when I promised to buy the house. It is not my fault if things have turned out differently. Don't talk like that, Nadenka. It is not money that brings happiness. We can do without the house. I tell you once more that things have turned out differently to what I wished and expected."

Nadenka rose.

"Kouzma," she said reproachfully, "our wedding is fixed for the seventeenth of January. The priest will read the words of Our Lord: 'A man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh.' Do you understand what that means? It means that we two must henceforth be one. I can have no secrets from you, and you can have no secrets from me. How will you be able to hear those sacred words if you have decided beforehand not to heed them?"

"Nadenka!"

They stood face to face and looked at each other. Nadenka trembled inwardly at the idea that Kouzma might think she wished to break off the engagement from mercenary motives. Kouzma had flushed and stood fingering the skirts of his dark-blue tchekmen. A fierce struggle was raging in his soul. Honor

demanded that he should guard Evgueny's secret. "Perish yourself, but save a friend in need." This he ever remembered, but the sacred words of the Gospel loomed no less important in his consciousness. If at the bidding of Christ he and Nadenka became one flesh and one being, how could he keep anything from her? Kouzma felt his heart contract. . . . Was he, then, to tell her about Emmotchka as well? Drag his wife down into the abyss out of which he had barely escaped himself? And let her have a glimpse of the still more dreadful abyss of Evgueny's fall and degradation? Kouzma felt that some middle course, some compromise with his conscience was needed. But poor Kouzma's mind was not a subtle one, nor was he accustomed to seek tortuous paths. He stood silent, driven to the wall by the words of the Gospel, not knowing what to say. He realized that he was entering the Ogloblin family almost against the wish of Maria Alexéevna. Although he had grown up in her house, he was a stranger among all those people. Count de Balmen, Chappe de Rastignac and other French emigrants, as also Count Panin, Evreinoff and Fofo, with their refined language and refined thoughts, even Dournoff with his mannerisms, even sarcastic and cutting Antonsky, with their French talk (he knew that Nadenka even wrote her diary in French)—they all formed a set who read French poetry and French novels and conversed of French philosophers. While he, Kouzma, was but a strapping Cossack from the wild steppes, over six feet high, interested solely in things of the barrack-room. A fine fellow, and a brave fellow, may be. . . . . But how could he be compared to them? It was not as though it were a question of a boxing match. Kouzma realized that his marriage with Nadenka hung by a thread.

If Nadenka did not understand, if she did not side with him at once, then all was lost. And what then? How was he to explain to his father why the marriage had been broken off? What was he to say to him about the money? A new abyss, which threatened to engulf his happiness, yawned at Kouzma's feet, this time through no fault of his own.

Unaccustomed as he was to do much thinking, his mind was

now in a turmoil, his head painfully seeking a way out of his difficulties. Nadenka was a young girl. How was he to tell her about her brother's blind passion for that Frenchwoman? And about the rest? About the spies—the treachery. . . . About Evgueny's breach of trust and misuse of the money that had been confided to his care? No, he would never be able to speak about it. Better perish himself.

Kouzma was silent, but such despair was written on his face, that Nadenka felt a stab at the heart. "Why don't you speak, Kouzma? I am listening," she said with unexpected gentleness.

Into Kouzma's mind came a vague idea, an intuition of what to say so as not to lie and yet not to betray his friend. Stammering and hesitating, he began his tale. He told Nadenka in general terms that Evgueny had been entrusted with a sum of money to pay the ransom of his imprisoned companions, but, before that, he had fallen in with bad company on his way from Constantinople.

"They were sharpers, Nadenka, people who cheat at cards. Evgueny lost his head and . . . contracted a large gambling debt, which, on his arrival in St. Petersburg, they obliged him to pay with the money he had received there from the Minister. He confessed his wrongdoing to me alone. He wanted to shoot himself and asked me to lend him a pistol. What was I to do, Nadenka? . . . He was guilty, true. . . . But it is an unpardonable sin to commit suicide. So I said: 'Come with me to my father. He will give me fifty thousand to buy the house with . . . and I shall hand them over to you, to pay the ransom of your comrades. And everything shall be set right.'"

Kouzma had come to an end of his halting, disconnected tale, and stood without daring to raise his eyes. He did not see with what rapture Nadenka was gazing at him. Her eyes were glistening with tears. A myriad thoughts filled her soul as she listened to Kouzma's confession, and scales seemed to drop from her eyes. So that was what he was really like, her Kouzma? She had known Kouzma the bold Cossack, strong, lithe, brave and handsome. It was nice to lean on his arm, to put her hand on his shoulder when dancing. It was nice to

look into his brown eyes. She cared for him. But she had never paused to think of his soul, as though a man's soul could only reveal itself in the refined phrases of a Fofo. And suddenly she was given a vision of that soul. What a big, clean soul dwelt in the body of handsome, but simple minded Kouzma! And her pure girlish intuition told her, in that flash, it wouldn't be difficult to travel life's pathway hand in hand with this tall man who now stood before her, his eyes downcast.

"Souvoroff said: 'Perish yourself, but save a friend in need' " said Kouzma, continuing his own defence in much confusion.

"And what if Maman or I break off the engagement? What then?" Nadenka asked mischievously.

"I shall perish, Nadenka. Everybody says there is going to be a war. I shall seek death, I shall pray to God to let me die in honorable battle."

Kouzma's flaming cheeks were suddenly pressed between the warm, soft, perfumed palms of those dear little hands whose every finger had a caressing name of its own, and lips tender as rose-petals were pressed to his lips.

"And you doubted me? . . . You silly . . . bad boy. . . . Wait here a moment, I must speak to Maman."

"But, for heaven's sake, don't betray Evgueny's secret."

Maria Alexéevna did not take as simply as Nadenka hoped the news that, for various reasons to be explained later on, the purchase of the house would have to be delayed for a time. Kouzma was obliged to withdraw that evening without taking leave of her, as she did not even wish to see "the deceiver."

"Don't worry," said Nadenka as she lighted him to the stairs, her little fingers all transparent in the candle-flame. "Wait patiently. All will come right in the end. I shall arrange everything."

For three days, however, Kouzma was not received at the Ogloblins'. He would probably have been given his final congé if old Kozodéeff had not intervened, persuading Maria Alexéevna to be lenient. Moreover, Kouzma sent Serbedjab-Tiumen to say that Ataman Platoff and the Empress Maria Fedorovna

had consented to be his father and mother of honor [5] by proxy, whilst Count and Countess Orloff-Denissoff in person would give their officer their benediction before his leaving for church.

Maria Alexéevna, who was an intelligent woman, understood she would have to give in, and forgave Kouzma.

II.

THE wedding was held in the house-chapel of the new Central Postoffice, where it was then the fashion for society weddings to take place.

This chapel did not resemble other Orthodox churches in St. Petersburg. It was entirely dark and only lighted by large image-lamps, while the chandeliers which burned behind the Holy Screen near the altar shed a mellow, mysterious light which was like the twilight of the Roman Catacombs. The sacred images, too, were not like those one usually sees in Orthodox churches, but hung on the walls like pictures in a gallery. "Christ at Emmaus," "The Entombment of Our Saviour," "The Passion of Our Lord"—all these were the work of ancient masters and had been brought from abroad. The sumptuous halls adjoining the chapel were full of carved bureaux, girandoles, costly vases and Gobelin tapestry. One of those halls contained some armchairs from Marie Antoinette's favorite boudoir in the Petit Trianon and a valuable chandelier of wrought crystal which had once hung in the Prince of Orleans' Palais Royal. The furniture was Buhl, and there were bronze statutes by Houdon.

Everything was so "aristocratic," so unusual and so fashionably fine, that Maria Alexéevna felt her mood softening and looked with complacency at the delicate figure of Nadenka in

[5] The custom in old times in Russia did not allow the father and mother of the bride and the bridegroom to be present in church at the wedding. In their stead, a father and mother "of honor" escorted the bride and bridegroom to church and gave them their benediction at home before leaving. At present, however, this custom has ceased to be observed.

her transparent muslin veil, standing beside tall, well-built Kouzma in his red uniform with silver epaulets and sword-belt.

Court-choristers sang at the wedding, and when the priest read the Gospel and came to the words: "This is a great mystery," Nadenka squeezed Kouzma's hand very hard and they both thought of the mystery of Kouzma's action, which had all but severed them and that had then united them yet more closely.

When the wedding was over and Kouzma and Nadenka were receiving congratulations standing near the ambon,[6] Maria Alexéevna felt definitely pleased. War was in the air and it was not a bad thing to be the wife of an officer of the Guards, a Life-Guards Cossack. "He will soon rise in rank," she thought.

The newly-married couple were met at their door by the regimental band, and solemn fanfares sounded in the frosty air of the street.

The dinner went off beautifully. Prince Serbedjab drank a trifle too much and laughed too loud, but he looked so amusing in his gold-and-green robe that nobody thought the worse of him for it. Kouzma was perfectly sober, very solemn and important-looking, and very respectful towards his mother-in-law. This also pleased Maria Alexéevna.

The honeymoon lasted only a fortnight. Was Nadenka happy with her young husband? She often appeared for breakfast with red and swollen eyelids, but waited so impatiently each evening for his return from the regiment, counting the minutes until his arrival, and her face was so suffused with happy blushes at the sight of him, that nobody could have found on it any traces of the morning's tears.

A fortnight after the wedding, on a misty February morning, Maria Alexéevna, Nadenka and Dournoff drove in a sledge with a *troika*[7] of Dournoff's horses to see the Life-Guards Cossacks off. Their regiment was leaving, together with the Guards, for the Government[8] of Vilna.

[6] Raised platform in front of the Holy Screen.

[7] Three horses harnessed abreast. The word "troika" is also used to designate a sledge or any other vehicle with three horses harnessed to it abreast.

[8] Province. Russia was divided into "governments."

Long after the regiment had marched away, the troika remained motionless on the Pulkhov Hill, and, without taking her eyes off the trampled road, Nadenka gazed at the long grayish-red file of the Life-Guards Cossacks fading and disappearing in the distance.

There was a vague feeling of spring in the air. Mist curled over the snowy plain. The Duderhof Hill rose softly above it like a silvery cap, and the gray sky hung low over the earth. Although frosty silence had long since fallen, Nadenka still seemed to hear the distant echo of Cossack song and whistling and the beat of the tambourine.

At last, when all three had taken their places in the sledge and the troika began to descend the hill at a foot-pace, Nadenka said in a low voice, speaking to nobody in particular:

"He will never come back!"

War had not been declared as yet, and there might be no war at all, so nobody found any reply to her unexpected words. Mentally, Nadenka completed her sentence by thinking: "We have been too happy together. Such happiness cannot come twice."

III.

After having brilliantly carried out the mission entrusted to him by the Intelligence Section of the French Army, André Réville had returned to his brigade of Chasseurs-à-cheval under General Castex, and had marched into Prussia with his regiment commanded by Captain Marbot, owing to the illness of its Colonel, de La Nogarède.

Nobody doubted the imminence of the Russian campaign. Neither did Germaine, who wrote to her brother that she did not intend giving up her work in the future, and would certainly come to Moscow as soon as it was taken by the French.

"Do you know," she wrote, "that I have grown quite sentimental in that cold Russia. I sometimes feel sorry for the silly Russian boy who helped us so naively and gave up all his

money so simply. . . . It is foolish of me, of course, but I sometimes feel I love him."

On the 7th of June General Castex's Brigade, which was on the march from Konigsberg to Insterburg, had heard from General Headquarters that the Emperor would review the brigade at Insterburg the following morning.

At ten o'clock, the squadrons moved out to a large sandy common beyond the town, and for an hour an officer of the Imperial Staff lined up the men.

Marbot rode up at a foot-pace to where André Réville was drawing up his cavalrymen on the flank of the regiment. The men stood in orderly rows, in their dark-green uniforms with crimson pipings, braided with yellow and gold, the metal scales on the chin-straps of their headgear glittering, muskets hanging muzzle downward over the left shoulder on wide deerskin straps. The round copperplates on the crossed straps of the horses' headstalls shone in the sun.

The regimental colors, crimson and green, heavily embroidered in gold, hung motionless on their staff on the right flank of the third squadron.

With the subdued tints of its uniforms and the dark coats of its horses, the regiment was a model of elegance and refined French taste.

At last a group of horsemen appeared just where the straight Königsberg highway, planted with tufted apple and cherry-trees on either side, ran out of the rows of two-storeyed, clean stone houses. Two huge guardsmen mounted on tall horses, the barrels of their muskets resting on their hip, turned off the highway and approached the regiment at a brisk trot. About two hundred paces behind them rode a horseman on a wide-backed white horse, followed by about thirty other riders whose bright uniforms glittered with gold braid and gold shoulder-belts.

The brigade of the Chasseurs-à-cheval wavered a moment, dressed its ranks anew, unsheathed swords as with a single movement and remained motionless.

The fanfares sounded a welcome.

The Emperor rode up to the regiment at a short, even

gallop, reins held loosely. When quite close he put his horse to a foot-pace and rode along the ranks. He wore a dark-green uniform, and a wide three-cornered hat was pushed down low on his brow. A white waistcoat showed under the basques of his uniform, resting softly on the gold-embroidered pistol-holsters. His stout legs were tightly encased in buckskins.

Having finished his report, Marbot rode at the Emperor's right stirrup, without taking his eyes off him, ready to answer every one of his questions. He heard the heavy breathing of stout Marshal Oudinot behind, and the creaking of his saddle under him.

Marbot looked at Napoleon and did not recognize the Bonaparte of the Italian campaign. Where was the fiery glitter of the shining eyes? Where was the long hair falling to the shoulders, where the youthful suppleness of the slim figure. This was not the Napoleon of Eylau and Essling who had once visited a wounded Marbaux in hospital. He had grown stout and flabby. Only the bright intelligence of his eyes remained unaltered, and those eyes looked kindly, as of yore, into old soldiers' faces, as though recognizing them.

Napoleon rode silently along the front of the regiment, seemingly pleased with all he saw.

Suddenly he stopped on the left flank of the fourth squadron. It was so unexpected that the members of his retinue, who had not had time to rein in their horses, rode up quite close to him.

He turned his clean-shaven face with its compressed lower lip and said curtly, with a frown:

"Captain Marbot?"

"Present, Your Majesty."

"How many men has the Department of the Seine-et-Oise sent you during the last two years?"

"Eighty-two, Your Majesty."

"Are you satisfied with them?"

"Entirely satisfied. They are all in the first squadron. Splendid men."

"How many muskets have you from Toul and how many from Charleville?"

"The whole regiment has muskets manufactured at Charleville."

"How many Normandy horses are there in the regiment?"

"Two hundred and sixteen."

"How many from Brittany?"

"Thirty-one."

"How many German horses?"

"Two hundred and fifty-two."

The Emperor spoke curtly and dryly, putting question after question. The thought even flashed through Marbot's brain that he might, as a matter of fact, answer at random, since the Emperor would certainly not check his answers. Then immediately came the thought: "Yet who would dare to lie to the Emperor?"

Napoleon went on questioning. He asked Marbot how many men in his regiment wore three chevrons, how many wore two and how many wore one, also what the average age of officers, men and horses was. He was evidently pleased with Marbot's answers and holding out his hand to him, said:

"An excellent regiment. Splendidly up to the mark."

IV.

In the afternoon of the same day, Napoleon left Insterburg for Gumbinen in a closed carriage. Contrary to his custom, he was alone. A large map of the neighborhood of Kovno lay open before him on a folding table, and the Emperor studied it attentively.

War had not yet been declared, and the massing of troops in Prussia and the Dukedom of Warsaw did not inevitably signify the outbreak of war. Napoleon knew that the Emperor Alexander did not desire and would not declare it and that the whole question rested entirely with him, Napoleon. And this made him very thoughtful. Once more he experienced the familiar sensation of his immense power and, at the same time, of enormous responsibility which could be shared with

no one. He might, of course, send all those human masses into the unknown. . . . What had they all—these Bavarians, Italians, Austrians, Spaniards, Dutchmen, Westphalians, all these men from Hesse or Baden, all these Poles and even these Frenchmen, to do with strange and distant Russia? Yet he could order them to march and they would march to their death.

No later than yesterday, when he had reviewed the troops of Marshal Oudinot's 2nd Corps, he had still hesitated. How many stragglers there had been, how bad the horses of the light cavalry regiment from Sedan! How awful those Croatians and Portuguese had looked! And they were shooting marauders and rounding up deserters in Marshal Davout's 1st Corps. Yes, yesterday he had still hesitated. . . . But to-day? What a splendid brigade! Especially the 23rd Regiment and its Captain, Marbot. Napoleon recollected that he had been asked to promote Marbot to the rank of colonel. "Well, let him wait for a while. . . . There would soon be opportunities for promotion if war was declared."

Suddenly, he somehow began to think of this war as already decided. And, at the same time, the unpleasant thought flashed through his mind that he was acting for the first time without a definite plan, without having thought out and weighed everything beforehand. For the very first time, there was a kind of vagueness in his designs. "Anyhow, Alexander has scattered his forces. Barclay is near Vilna. Bagration has stuck near Volkovysk,—convenient for each being beaten in turn. And who is in command of those troops? Germans, nothing but Germans!"—thought Napoleon wrathfully. "Alexander is only present to keep up the spirits of his troops, but the plans are all worked out by Germans, those very same Germans I conquered at Jena and Austerlitz."

Suddenly an unexpected thought arose in his mind:

"Why go to war at all?" And, finding no answer to his own question, he thought gloomily of Alexander. "Well, that's his business after all."

Through the windows of the carriage he caught a glimpse of tufted cherry trees. Their bloom had fallen, and Napoleon's

sharp eye could distinguish the pale little balls of fruit among the pointed, shining leaves. He recollected having heard from a German, in 1807, that all the roads in Prussia had been planted with fruit trees by order of King Frederick the Great, who had decreed death for anybody attempting to take fruit that didn't belong to him.

"The fruit will ripen," mused Napoleon, "and our men will strip all the trees by the roadside and in the gardens. It will be fortunate if they don't hew down the trees themselves and cut them up for fuel." And he again began to think about war. To raise an army of one million and a hundred and eighty thousand men, concentrate three hundred and twenty-five thousand of them on the Russian frontier, organize military depots and stations across the whole of Europe and then not to declare war, but let the men disperse to their homes. . . . That was simply impossible.

He thought of an old grenadier he had questioned in the Corps of Marshal Davout. A dry, bony face had looked at him from under his shaggy cap. One might have thought that a skull had put on a grenadier's cap, had not a pair of deeply sunk eyes been shining with enthusiasm in that skull. Strong, yellow teeth were grinning under the drooping moustache.

"Where do you hail from, old fellow?" Napoleon had asked him. "When did you begin to fight?"

"I come from the suburb of St. Antoine, and I have fought continuously since the taking of the Bastille," a hoarse voice had answered him. Two-thirds of his army had passed through the revolutionary school. What did they know, except the art of fighting? They had marched across the whole of Europe, and each house where they had taken up their winter quarters had seemed their own. They acknowledged no rights of property. Let them go home now, and they would plunder and lay waste the whole of Europe on their way. No, better let them plunder and lay waste that mysterious Russia which was hindering his plans for destroying England.

A sharp thought pricked him: "What if we perish in the limitless steppes where the Swedish army of King Charles XII perished in its time?"

Napoleon leant back in the carriage. His face was pale. A hard smile lay on his lips, his eyes were half-closed. His thoughts turned elsewhere. He recollected the days of his youth, seeming to see once more the Parisian rabble, that same rabble which had executed kings and desecrated churches and cathedrals. "What has life shown them? The guillotine in a great square, and the execution of aristocrats as a daily spectacle. A whole generation of Frenchmen has been educated on bloodshed, treachery and violence. This wild-beast passion, this revolutionary vileness of unending treachery, can only be wiped out by blood. For the sake of France, for the welfare of France, they ought to be destroyed. All of them! . . . Even those brilliant marshals, eaten up by an excessive ambition and full of hatred for one another . . . and hating me as well . . . who only wait for an opportunity to betray me. And those officers, who look at me and dream of being Napoleons themselves. Even those old soldiers. . . . They have seen too much blood and violence to be capable of building up a peaceful life. War is dreadful not only in itself, but in its aftermath. . . . What a strange fate is mine! I was always against war, always sought for peace—yet my star inexorably led me to military glory. And now, the world is led by Alexander, not myself, to this new horror."

Napoleon put his hand to his temple and sighed. A sudden feeling of fatigue came over him and something, maybe the germ of some unsuspected illness, caused a sharp pain in the region of his heart. The gentle swaying of the carriage seemed fatiguing and the relay interminable. "Will we never get to a post-station to change horses," he thought irritably.

At last the carriage stopped. A good-looking, boyish page, bareheaded, with smooth and glossy hair, ran up to the carriage door. German drivers led up fresh horses, glancing timidly at the carriage. The station-master ran to and fro, bowing low to the French Emperor, shouting at the drivers and snatching at the traces. Napoleon looked out of the window and ordered Berthier to be summoned.

All trace of his sudden fit of fatigue had passed, and when the carriage once more pursued its way, the Emperor was

calmly dictating to his Chief of Staff orders for crossing the Niemen.

"The Russians will certainly offer an obstinate resistance at this strong natural frontier," he said with assurance.

"It is known to our Intelligence Section, however, that the Emperor Alexander's Staff has not come to any decision as yet," remarked Berthier.

"And where is the Emperor himself?"

"In Vilna."

"I shall force him to sue for peace there," said Napoleon wrathfully. And he thought to himself: "What a relief it would be!"

V.

On the 8th of June Napoleon arrived at Vilkovishki.

His Army was marching in three endless columns to the Niemen. The Guards, a huge mass of 250,000 men, consisting of three Infantry Corps under Marshals Davout, Oudinot and Ney, and of three reserve Cavalry Corps under Nansouty, Montbrünn and Grouchy, were concentrated near the Nogaraisk farm opposite Kovno. Napoleon was supreme leader. His brother Jerôme, King of Westphalia, with three Infantry Corps under Generals Junot, Poniatovsky and Regnier, and a Cavalry Corps under Latour-Maubourg (80,000 men in all) was advancing on Grodno south of Napoleon. To the north of the main forces Eugene Beauharnais, Viceroy of Italy and son of the Empress Josephine by her first marriage, was advancing on Piloni with an Army of 70,000 men, consisting of his Corps and that commanded by St.Cyr. All this huge mass of troops, which stretched for dozens of miles, was protected from the Russians by thick forests near Pilvishki and by hills sloping gently down to the river Niemen.

Despite his firm resolution to make war, an unpleasant doubtful feeling haunted Napoleon. He arrived at Pilvishki by a forest road during the night of the 11th of June, stepping

out of his closed carriage near the first house of the town, a gray wayside inn built of wood, where saddled horses awaited him.

In the tall pine forest the treetops swayed and murmured dreamily through the darkness. The enthusiastic shouts of his army and the vivid flashes of camp-fires had been left behind. It was dark and quiet in the forest. Rectangular red patches of light fell from the inn's small windows onto the deeply rutted sandy road. A cold dampness rose from the wide river at the foot of the forest. The lights of the pontoon battalions camping lower down along the bank were reflected snake-like in the water. A hushed murmur of voices and the sound of axes came thence, shattering the silence of the night.

Napoleon looked long and attentively at the Russian bank of the river and the dark silhouettes of its forests. Standing sideways to it, he strained his ears for a long time, as though listening for something. Not a sound, not a light. The dark, calm sky above the bank on the foreign side was spangled with gently twinkling stars, but here the water reflected no wood-fires. One might have thought there was no Russia there, its Army tense with the same strained expectation of battle, but only a dead and uninhabited desert.

Napoleon turned away from the river. Roustam the Mameluke brought up his horse. The Emperor took hold of the stirrup and then stopped, hesitating whether to ride on or not. But, on hearing his retinue mounting their horses behind him, he gently pressed his knee against the velvet saddle and mounted with an easy and familiar movement. A page handed him a Polish Uhlan's cap and cloak. Napoleon put both on after taking off his own cloak and hat and handing them to the lad, and then rode down to the river.

The descent was steep and uneven. The horse kept slipping on the smooth moss and the roots of the trees. Suddenly it stumbled and fell down on its knees, and Napoleon slipped over its head to the ground. Roustam immediately ran up, helping him to rise and re-mount before anyone else had time to appear.

"You are not hurt, Your Majesty?" asked the Mameluke

in a low voice, brushing the sand off the Emperor's Polish cloak with the sleeve of his braided jacket.

Napoleon gave a backward glance at his retinue. All kept silence, save one man who, invisible in the darkness, said in a low voice, as though speaking to himself:

"Ceci est d'un mauvais présage. Un Romain reculerait." [9]

Napoleon spurred his horse and galloped to the bank of the river.

"Un mauvais présage," kept beating in his brain, driving all other thoughts away.

Before him flowed the Niemen, a dark and rapid stream. The enemy's side of the river was better seen from here. It sloped down to the water in a sandy incline, which became abrupt in some places. Above rose the black mass of the forest, all hushed and mysterious.

Pontoon officers came up. Lowering his voice, which sounded unnecessarily loud in the silence of the night, Napoleon gave the order for the river to be bridged in three places.

"Well? Can you hear nothing?" he asked an elderly captain.

"Nothing, Your Majesty."

From the forest on the opposite bank came the sad, long-drawn cry of an owl.

"Very well," said Napoleon. "You may begin to cross at dawn."

"C'est entendu, Votre Majesté." [10]

Deeply immersed in thought, Napoleon rode back at a foot-pace to the inn, dismounted without saying a word to anybody, entered his carriage, and gave the order to drive back to Vilkovishki.

When he arrived there, the slanting yellow rays of the sun were already lighting up the Polish house which was his head-quarters, and the tent which had been set up for him in the garden. He went straight into the tent where his camp-bed had been made up for the night. On a small table stood two candles, whilst writing materials and some writing-paper were

[9] "This is a bad omen. A Roman would retreat."
[10] "Very good, Your Majesty."

laid out in order. A wide Arabian carpet with a bright design covered the rough, uneven, grass-grown earth. Throwing off the Polish cloak which hid his ordinary uniform, Napoleon sat down by the table and, leaning his elbows on it, buried his face in his hands. He remained in this position for a long time. The sun was beginning to shine through the top of the tent, and the smell of canvas grew stronger as the heat increased. Birds were twittering in the garden, and the mew of the catbird resounded piteously. Cooks were already clattering their knives in the kitchen. The Emperor's valet had peeped into the tent several times, but Napoleon continued to sit motionless.

A clear and hot day was setting in. The honey-like scent of clover and the smell of thyme and camomile were wafted to the tent, together with the humming of bees. The air became stifling inside and the flies were growing tiresome. Only then did the Emperor rise and seek the cool freshness of the shuttered house. Stopping in the last of a row of rooms, he gazed for a long time at the ikon, painted in colors and gold, which hung in a corner of the room. It represented the Virgin with a crown on Her head and a flaming heart in the middle of Her bosom. On a shelf before the shrine stood wooden statuettes, and garlands of white and pink daisies lay on it.

"Faith is a naive thing," thought Napoleon, "yet it is difficult to live without it."

Nobody dared to break upon the Emperor's solitude. Berthier could be heard dictating an order-of-the-day next door, and then a voice read out a report covering ten days.

"5th Polish Corps, 16th Division, 296 officers, 11,273 men, 167 officers' horses, 780 cavalrymen's ditto, 783 pack horses. . . ."

There was the rustle of paper and then the same loud, even voice went on: "17th Division . . . 300 officers. . . ."

The Emperor rose noiselessly and, passing through all the rooms, went back to the tent. There the air had become still more stifling and flies had settled on the canvas ceiling in a cunning design of Turkish hieroglyphics. Napoleon remained standing in the tent for a moment, then returned to the house.

The same monotonous voice continued reading on the other side of the door.

"4th light Cavalry Division: 173 officers, 3,720 men. . . ."

These figures invaded the Emperor's brain, seeming to gather in close rows in his mind. But were they only figures? Napoleon seemed to see Colonel de la Nogarède, mounted on a plump old horse and looking at him with red and watering eyes out of swollen eyelids, while he himself, in a sudden fit of anger, shouted at the officer. He saw Captain Marbot on a splendid Turkish charger—Marbot, that brave soldier on whose face could be read joyful eagerness to serve him. Then the orderly rows of the Chasseurs-à-cheval rose before his mental vision. The men were looking at him with eyes full of enthusiasm and awe. . . . And, as though responding to those images in his brain, the dull, monotonous voice behind the door said:

"23rd Regiment of Chasseurs-à-cheval. . . . Are the documents concerning Captain Marbot's promotion ready, Colonel?"

Napoleon was unusually silent at lunch and at dinner. As soon as twilight had set in, he again drove to the inn and then rode down to the river-bank.

At that very moment, several sappers had crossed the Niemen in light boats and were climbing up the opposite bank. Suddenly the mounted figure of a Cossack officer appeared before them. He let them approach and then cried out in bad French:

"Who are you?"

"Frenchmen," was the answer.

"What are you doing here? What do you want with Russia?"

"We are fighting," one of the sappers answered roughly. "We want Vilna. We want the whole of Poland."

The sappers' loud laughter rang over the bank of the river. The Cossack turned his horse and disappeared in the tangle of the forest. Three of the Frenchmen fired after him.

These three shots, the first of the war, broke the silence of the night and reverberated through the valley. As he stood by the water, Napoleon heard them and listened attentively.

He expected a running fire to break out on the opposite bank and whistling bullets to splash on the surface of the water.

All was silent, however. The echo rolled through the forest and then died away. The stars were still shining quietly in the dark-blue sky. Obviously there was nobody on the other side of the river.

Conquering an incomprehensible emotion, Napoleon gave the order for the *voltigeurs* to cross the river. Three companies crossed it in boats and scattered in the forest.

From the further bank came the rustle of branches thrust apart. A whistle sounded . . . then a low cry. The silence of the night enveloped those men whom the forest had swallowed up.

Napoleon sent his adjutant to order the general crossing of the river.

The columns advanced in complete silence; smoking was forbidden. The presence of these hordes of men was only felt by the human odor and the human warmth which permeated the freshness of the night. Regiments stood in close columns, without stacking their muskets, awaiting their turn to cross the river.

Over the bridges came the ceaseless stamp of feet, mingled with the rattle of heavily rolling cannons, whose red wicks were like glow-worms twinkling and flitting through the darkness. Hours passed thus.

The first rays of dawn shot through the interlaced branches of pines on the further side of the river, and the sun sparkled in fiery patches on the treetops.

Three dark torrents of men flowed over the bridges as though to meet the sun, and were engulfed by the forest.

The same solemn and impenetrable silence continued to brood over the Russian bank of the river.

VI.

DURING the whole of that day, the day of the crossing of the Niemen, Napoleon's tent was pitched on a tall hillock three hundred paces from the river. The Emperor sat in front of it on a small camp-stool, wearing a gray *surtout* over his dark-green uniform, and a wide, three-cornered hat.

The Russian bank of the river stood out more and more clearly. A gray mist curled over the surface of the river below, and the bridges with the incessantly flowing columns of troops seemed to have disappeared in it. But up here everything was clear, distinct and bright, and the morning sun was shining gaily on the gold braid, epaulets and shoulder-belts of the Emperor's retinue.

"How happy the Lithuanians must be," said one of those surrounding Napoleon, "at the thought of the freedom our Emperor is bringing them."

Hearing this, Napoleon examined the opposite bank of the river still more attentively. He took the field glasses a page held out to him and looked through them for a long time, then laid them on his knee with a suppressed sigh. He had, for a moment, expected to see variegated masses of people waiting for their liberator . . . gay flags waving over the treetops . . . green arches with garlands of flowers across the roads. . . . But there was nobody. Only three columns of troops were marching up three different roads to the sandy hillocks. From the height where Napoleon stood, a wide undulating plain opened out clearly on the further bank. Pine forests grew darkling there in separate patches and between them could be seen gray, miserable-looking villages. He could clearly distinguish a Catholic church near Kovno through his field glasses. A flankers' chain was approaching the horizon. Not a shot was heard. It seemed as though the French Army was entering a dead, empty space.

Impatience to act took hold of Napoleon. He ordered a horse to be brought and rode down to the bridge.

The infantry regiment crossing the bridge stopped. On seeing the Emperor, the men waved caps and muskets over their heads and the cry of *"Vive l'Empereur,"* uttered by a thousand voices, pealed forth over the river and rolled to the opposite bank. The infantry column which had crossed also stopped and turned to face the Emperor. There also, shakoes were waved in the air and the cry of *"Vive l'Empereur"* resounded. The faces of the men shone, and their eyes, swollen from the sleepless nights and day-time heat, were burning with enthusiasm. The Imperial Army was entering *"cette Sainte Russie,"* and, to all these men who had been in Egypt and over the Alps, this "Holy Russia" appeared as a land of legendary beauty and indescribable riches. They were marching to conquer it and believed that, with a leader like Napoleon, they would easily do so.

No sooner had Napoleon stepped on the Russian soil and his retinue had cleared the bridge, than the infantry regiment rushed after him.

"Vive l'Empereur!" did not cease to roll like thunder in the air. Pontoons shook and swayed under the impetuous torrents of men. Bayonets sparkled in the sun. Everywhere, amidst dark uniforms and gold-laced collars and red and gold epaulets, and under tall shakoes, were the same enthusiastic faces. According to the simple and naive conception of these men, the goal of their thousand-leagued campaign had been reached. Here was Russia! And, to them, the beginning of endless toil and labor did not lie beyond the slowly flowing river, but rather the end of labor already accomplished.

A wide prospect opened from the top of the hillock up which Napoleon had ridden, and where the road wound between fields of blossoming rye.

Right and left, endless columns of troops were to be seen advancing. They curved snake-like, following the curves of the road, and, as they approached, their variegated uniforms became visible, their cuirasses and helmets glittered, and the bodies of their brass guns shone through the white dust that rose over the serried ranks. As they moved on, the dusty curtain grew darker, hiding the troops from view, while on

the horizon high black streaks of dust alone showed the movements of the columns.

Carried away by this sight and excited by expectation of the enemy, Napoleon galloped forward with his brilliant retinue, and a wave of enthusiastic cries followed him. He galloped thus for several miles until he reached the vanguard. In front of him were similar fields of rye, slightly rippled by the breeze and dotted with blue cornflowers, and beyond them dark masses of forest.

There was no enemy in sight.

He came to a small village on his way, just six low huts to the left and three to the right of the road. The shutters were closed, not a soul was about. The Emperor reined in his horse and dismounted near one of the huts. A tall Chasseur-à-cheval of the Guards rushed forward, knocked the door open with his fist and opened the shutters. Napoleon went up the creaking steps into the house. A stale odor of sheepskin and sour dough met his nostrils, but the hut was empty. A child's cradle hung on a pole, and the rags it contained seemed still to preserve the shape and warmth of the child. Napoleon sat down on a bench near the table. Black flies were swarming and humming in the air. A number of red-brown cockroaches made a repulsive chain from the table to the wall. Napoleon frowned fastidiously and said to his adjutant:

"I should like to drink a glass of milk. Couldn't you get one from the inhabitants?"

While the adjutant and the orderly officers rushed to satisfy the Emperor's demand, he sat on the bench, listening to the tramp of feet as the infantry went by. About ten minutes passed. The adjutant returned and said in a confused voice:

"We have searched everywhere, Your Majesty, but there are no inhabitants and not a single cow anywhere. Not even a cat is to be seen."

The Emperor got up heavily from his bench. His eyes fell upon an image of the Virgin with a crown on Her head and a flaming heart in the middle of Her breast. The face was dark, but its large, oblong, unnaturally painted eyes stood out vividly. The Emperor frowned and left the hut.

Before him, dark clouds were curling low over the woods, mingling with the clouds of dust raised by the troops. Infantrymen marched heavily along the dusty road. Their heads were drooping and their faces gray with dust. Their uniforms were unbuttoned. About forty men had gathered near a well. Tin cans clattered, and a sergeant shouted hoarsely, bidding the men catch up the company that had gone on.

Suddenly a heavy sound, like that of a distant cannon-shot, made Napoleon raise his head and listen. "Is it a cannonade at last?" he thought.

A gust of wind swept by, bringing freshness with it, rustling the leaves on the apple-trees and raising a cloud of dust.

The distant sound had been no cannonade. Fresh claps of thunder rolled afar and there came a flash of lightning. The air turned cool, the horizon darkened, and cold, heavy black and purple clouds, saturated with rain, rushed rapidly upon Napoleon's Army, as though obeying a signal from above.

Holy Russia was meeting Napoleon with rain and thunderstorm.

Napoleon awaited the passing of the storm in a monastery. He listened to what the monks said (they had the tale from local inhabitants who had just come from Vilna) about a fête which had taken place there the day before, in a suburban villa at Zakret. The Emperor Alexander had been present.

"He did not expect Your Majesty so soon."

Towards nightfall Napoleon drove in a closed carriage to Kovno, where quarters had been prepared for him. The rain was still pouring down in dark streams. It had turned almost cold. The roads had been spoiled by the rain and the powerful team of four horses had some difficulty in dragging the Emperor's carriage along. Shadows of horses and men loomed at one side of the road. Horses were coughing heavily.

In the light of wood-fires smoking under the rain, this bivouac in the knee-deep mud had a dismal air.

The rain lasted for forty-eight hours on end. The daily reports were alarming. The army was melting away before having begun to fight. Thousands of cavalry and pack horses succumbed. Guns and wagons stuck in the mud and had to

be abandoned. The army advanced without a single shot or skirmish. Cossacks occasionally loomed on the horizon, but disappeared so swiftly that the French patrols sometimes wondered whether they had appeared at all. Perhaps it had been a mere trick of the imagination. This mysterious Muscovy now seemed to them a land of ghosts.

On the 16th of June Napoleon crossed to the right bank of the Vilia and caught up the troops of Marshal Oudinot's Corps which was approaching Vilna. According to the information obtained from local inhabitants, the Emperor Alexander had not yet left this town.

The day was clear and fresh. Yesterday's dark and threatening sky was now pale-blue, as though washed clean by the rain, with fleecy white and pink clouds beyond the forest; and the wind was growing warmer. The wagon trains advanced slowly along the muddy, trampled road where the troops had passed. Napoleon left his carriage, got on horseback and, riding over green and springy fields beside the road, caught up the front line of the Division commanded by Bruer. On the Russian side of the Vilia its sandy declivities sparkled in the sun, whilst the green tops of the tall and beautiful pine forest swayed and murmured in the wind. Beyond the forest could be seen the white houses and green-domed churches of the suburbs of Vilna. Without dismounting, Napoleon gazed long through his field glasses, longing, as he had done on the banks of the Niemen, to see columns of troops and batteries getting ready for action. . . . Troops in battle array, for a battle which would decide the fate of the war and put an end to all doubts. . . . But what was this? Tall pillars of smoke rose beyond the town. A pale yellow flame flashed out and the smoke grew darker. The blaze of a fire illumined the horizon.

Near the river, beyond a small grove of pine trees, on a sandy hillock overgrown with heather, columns of dismounted cavalry regiments were drawn up in dark squares. This was the 2d reserve Corps commanded by General Montbrünn. The thin, exhausted horses seemed to disappear under the heavy saddles with their packs. Many of the beasts lay on the ground. French cuirassiers from Metz, Pont-à-Mousson, Beauvais and

Sarre-Louis, and tall Alsatians looked out gloomily from under their metal helmets. Carabiniers, Chasseurs-à-cheval, Hussars and Prussian Uhlans, sixty squadrons in all, were drawn up at the halting-place.

"Why are they not advancing?" Napoleon asked wrathfully. "Call General Montbrünn to me."

A lean cuirassier general left a group of officers on the outskirts of the forest, swung himself heavily upon a black horse, and galloped wearily up to the Emperor.

"What are you doing here?" asked Napoleon, restraining a growing irritation.

"Your Majesty, I am waiting for the river to be bridged. I have sent men to look for a ford, but after the rain, the river Vilia. . . ."

"You are talking nonsense, General," the Emperor interrupted. "The river Vilia is but an insignificant stream."

"The horses are tired," Montbrünn began in self-defence.

"Silence! Are you not ashamed of yourself? I shall be obliged to relieve you of your command. Give your regiments the order to mount. We are marching on Vilna."

The Emperor turned to the squadron of Polish Uhlans accompanying him. It consisted entirely of privates and officers belonging to rich Polish families. Napoleon's glance fell on a young Uhlan, almost a boy, who stood holding a trumpet behind the long, lean squadron commander. In the boy's dark, gold-rimmed eyes, in the whole strained attitude of his slim, slight body, which bent forward as though ready for instant action, the Emperor read such a longing to perform some heroic deed, such a desire to show what the liberated Poles were worth, that a sudden decision formed in Napoleon's mind.

"Gentlemen!" he cried. "Will you show the French cavalry what Polish knighthood is capable of?"

The face of the Uhlan Colonel lit up with joy, his brick-red cheeks became purple. He turned to the squadron.

"Form fours—by the right! Open your ranks! Trot!" Then, turning his face once more towards the Emperor, he shouted: "Forwards!"

The squadron turned, and, with a stamping of horses' hoofs

over the heather, rode past the Emperor and past the regiments of General Montbrunn.

A narrow road, paved with cobble-stones, led to the bridge, but the bridge had been burnt by the Cossacks at dawn. The river Vilia flowed in a dark torrent, swollen by the rain. On its further side stretched a low green meadow, immediately beyond which rose sandy hillocks.

The Colonel's horse hesitated for a moment on the brink of the river, and the boy-trumpeter, riding past him, jumped and fell heavily into the water. The Colonel jumped in his wake. Further back, row after row, the Uhlans' bay horses entered the river. The bank fell steeply towards the water and the horses, sinking to their very necks, reared in an attempt to touch the bottom with their hind legs. Some of them, urged on by their riders, swam to mid-stream, but, frightened by the rapidity of the current, turned back. Others struggled near the bank, trying to throw their riders off into the water. Everything became a confused tangle. The cries of "Forwards!" mingled with the cries of *"Vive l'Empereur!"*

The boy trumpeter's gray mare had thrown off her rider. He swam forward alone, but, weighed down by his wet clothes, began to sink. His lancer's cap, with its yellow top and red horsehair aigrette, came to the surface for a moment. His hairless, almost childish face showed pale. Once more he cried: "Vive l'Empereur!" in ringing tones, and then his head disappeared again, this time forever, in the dark torrent.

Only a few men here and there reached the further bank, caught their horses, and then, sitting down on the grass, emptied their boots of water. Many of the Polish Uhlans, the squadron commander among them, were drowned. Some returned to the bank whence they had started, and could not make their horses re-enter the water.

The Emperor watched this scene with a gloomy and distrait air. "Perhaps it was necessary," he thought. His face showed no trace of emotion. He was accustomed to see men die for him.

Meanwhile the sappers had finished bridging the river; and the 8th Hussars, having crossed it, rode off at a trot towards

Vilna. They were met at its gates by a deputation of townspeople, waiting with bread-and-salt [11] to receive the Emperor Napoleon. It was composed of the same members as that which, a few days before, had done likewise on the arrival of the Emperor Alexander in Vilna.

Lieutenant Count de Ségur, of the 8th Hussars, galloped with his troop through the cobbled streets of the town, left the Antokolsky suburb behind, and trotted over deep sands towards a wood where pine trees grew sparsely. The red jacket and white shoulder-belt of a Life-Guards Cossack suddenly glimmered beyond the last wooden houses of the town as their wearer galloped in the same direction, almost overhauled by the Count de Ségur and his Hussars. Every now and then the Cossack looked back without interrupting his gallop, and then his ruddy, broad face with prominent cheek-bones and narrow, screwed-up eyes could be seen under his shako. When the Hussars were quite close, he whipped up his horse with a *nagaika* [12] and easily out-distanced them. In fact, he seemed to be playing with the Frenchmen.

The Cossack was alone. Fresh squads of Hussars were galloping on all sides towards the same green common. Prince Hohenlohe had darted forward and, pointing with his sabre, was urging Count de Ségur to catch the Cossack.

"Kouzma Ivany-ytch! . . . Help!" the Cossack cried, making for the pine wood which was now quite near.

The echo of this "Help" rolled through the wood and was immediately followed by a long and unearthly, quite inhuman whoop. The whole wood seemed to ring with it. Red jackets appeared everywhere among the pine trunks, and Cossacks galloped through the wood with the speed of antelopes. In a few moments, Lieutenant Count de Ségur was surrounded, wounded and thrown off his horse before the very eyes of his Hussars, who had entirely lost their heads. A tall Cossack officer, his lance at the ready, attacked Prince Hohenlohe and threw him off his horse. The red riders poured forth on all

[11] A Russian custom. The Russian way of welcoming and showing hospitality.

[12] Cossack whip.

sides from the wood. The Hussars were attacked, dispersed, and impetuously driven back into town.

The reinforcements hastily sent by General Montbrünn found nobody on the site of the scrimmage. The Cossacks had disappeared on the road to Sventziany.

On reaching the outskirts of the wood, the weary French cavalry bivouacked there, a flankers' chain entering the wood itself. From Vilna came an acrid smell of smoke and burnt grain and flour. The Russian troops had set fire to barns and store houses before leaving.

Napoleon entered Vilna that day, taking up his quarters in the very same house where the Emperor Alexander had passed the night only twenty-four hours earlier.

VII.

A COOL evening followed the clear and sunny day, and, even as the sun and the sky flamed with heavenly fire in the west, a young crescent moon rose from behind the clouds that hung low over the forest.

Napoleon entered the room whch had been prepared for him as a study, where the oaken squares of a polished parquet floor shone. Twenty-four hours before, the Emperor Alexander had lived here. It seemed as though the scent of his favorite English perfume still hung in the air. The white and blue striped wall-paper seemed impregnated with his thoughts, and, in a corner of the room, a few nails were still sticking in the wall, upon which the ikons belonging to the Russian Emperor had probably been hanging. Napoleon frowned. "They can't do without those eternal ikons!"

Everything had been arranged in the room according to the habits of the French Emperor, as it had been done in his tent at Wagram and Austerlitz, at the Imperial Palace at Shönbrunn near Vienna, and in the little German house at Tilsitt, . . . as everything had been arranged in 1805, 1807 and 1809 . . . as it was "at home" at Malmaison, at Fontainebleau

and at the Tuileries. . . . This was necessary. Nothing, not even the most insignificant detail was to draw his attention and his thoughts away from his work. The writing-desk was three steps distant from the window. Two heavy candlesticks, his traveling-inkstand, his seals and an engraved brass hand-bell stood on the desk; sealing-wax and some pink quills lay upon it. Against the wall, to the right, stood his camp-bed; beside it, a little table held books from his traveling-library, together with a candle and flint and steel for striking a light. A carpet had been laid on the floor near the bed. They were all things he was used to and had used for years of campaigning, things that seemed to hold the victorious thoughts of many campaigns.

The Emperor opened the door to the right. In the next room, an enormous map of the Russian Empire lay unfolded on the floor. A bronze compass lay upon it ready for use. An officer of the Topographical Section sat at a little table in a corner of the room, and sprang to his feet on seeing the Emperor enter. Everything was ready for a strenuous night's work.

Napoleon went back to his study and flung the window open.

Outside, all the customary arrangements had likewise been made. Four sentinels, tall chasseurs of the Guards, stood each at a corner, as is usual at bivouacs. Without his express order, nobody could pass beneath the Emperor's windows and so interrupt his thoughts.

He stood for a moment at the window, looking straight before him.

The garden avenue sloped gently down, and the white trunks of its ancient birches were red in the light of the setting sun. At times the evening breeze turned their round leaves over, and then they gleamed like silver. A current of fresh air came from the garden, laden with something never felt in Egypt, in Italy, nor in Austria. It spoke of the wide spaces of field and forest, it bore the fragrant scent of new-mown hay, of wet birch leaves, of spruce, of juniper and cornflowers. There was nothing spicy in it, but something caressing, indefinably attractive, which predisposed to rest and dreaming. It seemed as though everything breathed of peace here, of unawakened

passions and quiet healthy sleep. It was pleasant, yet there was something unfamiliar and vaguely disquieting in it. And when the well-known smell of wood-smoke and of a military bivouac was wafted towards him from the direction of the town, he inhaled it with pleasure.

The Emperor closed the window and approached the writing-desk, on the left side of which lay a pile of dispatches and documents and some gray-blue and some yellowish paper. Near the edge of the desk was a separate pile of thick and heavy envelopes with bright red seals. This was the mail.

In the middle of the desk lay a large blotter-pad of light-brown leather, with an Imperial crown and the letter "N" stamped in gold upon it. The Emperor looked at it and opened it without sitting down. At the very top lay a copy of his order of the day, specially printed for him on thick vellum paper. It had been issued at Vilkovishki on the 10th of June. He began to read it:

"Soldiers! The second Polish campaign has begun. The first ended at Friedland and Tilsitt, where Russia swore eternal alliance with France and war with England. Now she has broken her oath and refuses to give any explanation of her incomprehensible behavior until the French eagles go back beyond the Rhine, thus delivering our allies into the power of Russia. Her fate must run its course. Does she think that we have changed? Are we not the men who fought at Austerlitz? Russia gives us no choice between war and dishonor. There can be no doubt as to which we shall choose. We shall cross the Niemen and carry the war into Russia's borders. The second Polish campaign will shed glory on the French arms even as the first has done. But the treaty of peace we shall sign will this time be a lasting one, putting an end to the braggart influence which Russia has exercised for fifty years over the affairs of Europe."

Napoleon raised his head from the paper and shrugged his shoulders with a dissatisfied air. "A pack of lies!" he thought, and a trifle which had impressed him unpleasantly the day before returned to his mind. An old Russian, captured in the forest, had explained something to the interpreter, repeating

over and over a phrase which he evidently considered specially convincing.

"What does he say?" Napoleon had asked the interpreter:

"He is repeating the Russian saying that a lie will take you all over the world, but you will never come back again."

Somehow, this trifling incident now seemed to be a bad omen.

"Yes, it's all a pack of lies!" he thought again. "When did Russia swear to make war on England? Only once, long ago, we were able to persuade that madman, Paul, to undertake an Indian campaign with his Cossack troops. An absurd enterprize, to tell the truth. And what braggart influence does Russia exercise on the affairs of Europe? Russia has guarded peace and quiet for over fifty years, ever since the time of the Empress Catherine. . . . And these Poles? All this partition of Poland? . . . What has France to do with Poland, after all? And what has Russia to do with England? If England hinders France, why shouldn't I carry out my old plan of building a fleet, crossing the Channel with my army and dictating my terms of peace to the English in London? My goal should be London, and I am marching on Moscow. Who, then, is driven by fate—I or Alexander?"

And once more, as it had been the case when approaching Vilkovishki in his closed carriage, he felt a sharp pain, like the sting of a snake, in his left side, near the heart.

"A lie will take you all over the world, but you will never come back again. . . ." The tiresome words flashed through his brain, and then his eye caught a line of his order of the day:

"Are we not the men who fought at Austerlitz?"

"Another lie!" He thought of General Montbrünn's Corps which he had seen the day before. Horses had been lying on the sand, refusing to rise, and the men had had to lift them up. They had kicked them in the belly, and the poor animals had got up groaning, all lean and shaggy, their coats soiled. Ten thousand horses had succumbed during those five days of bad weather. Ten thousand! The ox-carts with twenty days' provisions could not keep up with the army, for the beasts died by the way. There had been some cases of hunger suicide

among the soldiers. "And this the first week of the war," mused Napoleon. "I know nothing of what is going on in Jerôme's army. We cannot link up. . . . These enormous distances destroy all one's calculations. Before mounted orders can be brought, circumstances have changed. . . . And I have no idea of what is going on in Macdonald's army. No, these are not the men who fought at Austerlitz, and this war is not the same either. One has to hurry, to catch up, to pursue. . . . And some of the men can't go on. . . . One hears all the time that they are exhausted."

"But one will never go back . . . " kept beating in the Emperor's brain. He threw the order-of-the-day onto the desk and went up to the window.

A clear night was shining over the garden. The blue evening star burnt in a pale sky. Napoleon looked at it. "The undimmed star of Napoleon's glory. . . ." He recollected the oft-repeated expression of Court flatterers, which had now grown wearisome.

The Emperor sighed and sat down in a mahogany armchair standing before the desk. He drew a pile of papers to him and began to examine them. He stretched his hand out with an accustomed movement and rang the little bell without looking for it; he knew where it always stood.

A page silently appeared at the door.

"Call Marshal Berthier and the Duc de Trévise [13] to me."

"A truce to conjecture. I must work," Napoleon said to himself, and his thoughts returned to their usual channel.

"The maps are unfolded and the reports have been received. This is a theatre of war, and not a ballet theatre in Paris. I must decide where and how many men I must move, how many hospitals I must organize, also how new operations must be extended. A new state, Lithuania, must be created. And there are Europeon politics to be thought of. . . . The distant Spanish war, the administration of France. There is the opening of the Diet in Warsaw. Speeches. . . . That is all nonsense. They want to be Frenchmen, and I want Poles. . . . I must work, work, work."

[13] Marshal Mortier.

As though in answer to his thoughts, a hushed murmur of many voices came from the next room, which Staff officers sent to keep up liaison with the columns, were entering. There was a knock at the door. The page announced respectfully:

"Marshal Berthier and the Duc de Trévise."

"Admit them."

VIII.

After the skirmish with French Hussars near Vilna, Cornet Kouzma Minaieff of the Life-Guards Cossacks had been ordered to take important dispatches to Prince Bagration, at the Headquarters of the 2d Army. Having sent on a Cossack with his horse by a circuitous route, Kouzma made his way in a peasant's cart through forests to Volkovysk, at the risk of falling into the hands of the advancing French Army.

It was that beautiful evening hour when, in summer, the sun is still high in the sky, although the shadows have already lengthened and an almost imperceptible freshness is in the air. The scent of hay grows stronger and the song of the lark is louder in the blue heavenly spaces above. The clear, transparent atmosphere carries voices farther and echoes are more resounding.

Kouzma, in his peasant's cart with its two horses, was approaching Volkovysk where, according to information given by villagers, a large number of Russian troops were concentrated. He had been driving for over twenty-four hours through dense pine forests without meeting a soul. It was only at dawn that day, when reaching a wide clearing, that he had suddenly, with a quickened heart-beat, seen the silhouettes of a few horsemen in the west, where everything was still shrouded in mist. Kouzma had sat up in his cart, given an attentive look, and clutched his packet. . . . These silhouettes were so oddly familiar, however—a horse with its head lifted in the air and a rider sitting high in the saddle and bending forward slightly—that Kouzma had felt relieved.

"Those are our men . . . Cossacks . . . Ataman Platoff's Corps must be somewhere in the neighborhood."

And indeed, Kouzma stumbled upon the bivouac of a Cossack regiment as he drove through a small village. The men were still asleep. Wood-fires were smoking and the horses were picketed. An officer explained Kouzma's nearest way to Volkovysk, saying that nothing had been heard of the enemy thereabouts. They did not even know that war had been declared, that Napoleon had crossed the Niemen and had entered Vilna.

Life went peacefully on around them. Wood-cutters were felling trees in the forest. Pitch was being burnt. Peasant women in bright red shawls drove by in carts, probably to church. In the villages, old men sat on the banks of earth which surrounded the houses, and children played nearby. Horses were obligingly found for Kouzma and quickly harnessed to his cart. Questions were put calmly. Nobody believed that the French would come so far as that. . . .

Kouzma was proceeding at a foot-pace. The horses were tired. The driver, a peasant in a gray homespun overcoat, smoked his pipe leisurely, and the smell of *makhorka*,[14] tar, and horses' sweat mingled with the forest scents of pine and mushrooms. Despite his fatigue, Kouzma's heart was light. His task was drawing to an end. Volkovysk was near.

Faint sounds of military music reached him, so faint, that they might have been a delusion. Kouzma often fancied he heard music, and with him it was always a token of good luck. However, it was, indeed, a military band playing something out of a popular opera. The sounds were occasionally lost in the tall forest aisles, and then again heard distinctly.

Suddenly they became quite loud and near. The forest abruptly ended. A few fir and pine trees grew at some distance from the outskirts of the forest. A solitary pine stood on a sandy mound overgrown with heather, and beyond it stretched a wide valley crossed by a river and dotted with bivouacs. Near the outskirts of the forest some planks had been laid upon drums, and on these planks stood bottles and

[14] A cheap tobacco smoked by common people in Russia.

plates with food. Officers in black uniforms sat around. A band was playing close by. The entire valley was covered with huts made of green boughs which took the place of tents. As Kouzma approached the bivouac, the band ceased playing, and a high and resounding tenor voice began to sing on the further side of the improvised table, where the regimental singers[15] stood.

The band and this ringing tenor, and the mighty notes of the choir, the setting sun shining gaily on the green bivouac, all gave the impression of some military festivity. Kouzma jumped down from his cart and walked to the officers' table.

Several officers came forward to meet him. One of the soldiers brought him on a plate a goblet filled to the brim with vodka.

Kouzma inquired of the officers how he was to reach Prince Bagration, Commander-in-Chief of the 2d Western Army, to whom he was bringing a sealed packet. He told them of the invasion of Russia by Napoleon, without omitting to relate the episode of the skirmish in the Antokolsky suburb of Vilna, where he had wounded and captured a French officer. He was overwhelmed with questions.

"What? You say Napoleon has crossed the Niemen?"

"Yes, by three bridges."

"Well, and our troops?"

"Our troops retreated without fighting. There was only that skirmish near Vilna."

"And so we are at war?"

"And within the boundaries of Russia, too," said a ruddy-faced old captain with tufts of reddish-brown hair growing at his temples.

Kouzma was in a hurry to get on. He drank the vodka, thanked the officers and walked to his cart. A smart corporal got up beside the driver, offering to show the way. They drove briskly down to a bridge that spanned the stream, passed the

[15] Every Russian regiment had its special choir of singers besides the military band. These special "soldiers' songs," as they were called—were very patriotic and full of go. Russian troops went to battle with their singers at the head of the regiment.

green bivouac smelling of rotten leaves, and, crossing the bridge, began to ascend the road leading to the suburbs of the town.

Striped sentry-boxes and sentries of the Ladojsky Infantry Regiment stood near the house to which Kouzma drove up. Though not new, their linen trousers were freshly washed. Their uniforms were carefully patched, with brass buttons shining. The sentries presented arms with easy military precision. The setting sun flamed brightly on their well sharpened, three-sided bayonets.

A clean-shaven young officer with a sunburnt face, who was sitting near the front door, raised his narrow gray eyes from the book he was reading and looked inquiringly at Kouzma.

"A courier from the Headquarters of the 1st Western Army to his High Excellency Prince Bagration."

"I shall announce your arrival at once."

The officer entered the vestibule of the house and knocked at a door to its right.

"Come in," said a loud, nasal voice with a slight Caucasian accent.

The officer announced Kouzma and the same voice said: "Admit him."

Kouzma went up the steps and entered the room through the door which the officer held open for him.

In the large room, at a table covered with a pink tablecloth, upon which were maps, papers, and an inkstand, a spare, elderly man whose dark hair was abundantly streaked with gray, sat in an armchair. He had a delicately chiseled face with an aquiline nose and large black eyes under thick arched eyebrows. His small, almost feminine, singularly attractive mouth with dimples at the corners was unusually youthful for his age. A black scarf was wound round his neck. In lieu of a uniform he wore a soft and wide Caucasian under-tunic, while the uniform itself—with a high collar embroidered with laurel-leaves, and bearing a multitude of decorations and orders, hung on the back of a chair upholstered in leather. On the other side of the table on a sofa, leaning back against cushions and wearing a dark-blue Chinese robe, sat Kouzma's father, Ivan Kouzmitch Minaieff.

Kouzma adjusted the strap of his shako, stood at attention in the doorway and, without looking at his father, reported in a loud, distinct voice:

"Your High Excellency, his High Excellency Count Barclay-de-Tolley, Commander-in-Chief of the 1st Western Army, has sent me with some urgent papers."

He handed the packet to Prince Bagration, who took up a paper-knife from the table and began opening the envelope, looking wonderingly at Colonel Minaieff. The latter had risen in evident agitation.

"What is the matter, Minaitch?"

"Why—Prince Peter, this is my son . . . my son," said Minaieff, breathless with emotion.

"Is that so?" said Bagration, deep in the perusal of the papers which the envelope contained. "Well then, embrace each other."

IX.

THAT summer Maria Alexéevna and Nadenka, who had remained living with her mother after her marriage and the departure of Kouzma, left St. Petersburg for Moscow, where they settled down in Dournoff's beautiful house at the latter's insistent invitation.

Evgueny had left the Navy and had joined the Toula[16] Infantry Regiment. This unexpected decision to leave the traditional Service of the family had aroused his mother's indignation, but Evgueny had been inflexible. He now often visited Kozodéeff, and the old man had supported him in this. Nadenka, who had lately become very intimate with her brother, had not confessed to him her knowledge of his secret, but she had understood without words that her brother's decision had been dictated by a wish to punish himself and expiate his wrongdoing by this unpalatable army service.

Kouzma's letters were few and far between, and, as usual,

[16] Toula is the chief town of the province or "government" of the same name.

rather unintelligible and not even very literate. He wrote, however, that Napoleon was concentrating an army against them, but that most people still doubted the possibility of a war

There was something now which lent a new significence to Nadenka's existence. Aware of the new life within her, she rejoiced at the thought of the son to whom she would soon give birth. She did not doubt for a moment that it would be a son. At the same time she continued writing her diary in irreproachable French, went out into society, and met many interesting men there and at home. Dournoff's house was open to the whole of Moscow.

Later on, Nadenka never forgot the memorable 20th of June, 1812, terrible in its simplicity.

They had been at an evening party given by an aunt of Antonsky's who lived in Moscow, and were returning home in a crowd along the sleepy boulevards of Moscow, laughing at the recollection of all kinds of clever jokes heard at supper. Old Kozodéeff, Antonsky, Dournoff, handsome and lively Sophie Meledinsky, Annette Bolkonsky and pretty, quiet, nun-like Barbe Poustchin, they all formed part of the Ogloblins' intimate circle in St. Petersburg; and, when with them, Nadenka sometimes felt as though her life had not changed at all, and as though she were still a girl. She chatted gaily with her friends, and only occasionally noticed something in their glances which reminded her that she was married and soon to be a mother.

At Dournoff's pressing invitation, they all entered, gaily and noisily laughing, a large room divided in half by a mahogany screen with crystal panels. The large table was covered with a green table-cloth, and on it stood a basket of hot-house peaches from Dournoff's estate near Moscow. Two candles were burning on the table and a pile of letters lay beside them.

"Mesdames et Messieurs, I beg you to be seated," said Dournoff, pointing to some armchairs upholstered in dark-green leather. "You must taste some of my peaches. I can recommend them specially to your notice; and they are the first of the season."

Nadenka took up a large peach, but before she could eat it

Dournoff, who had opened a letter which lay on the top of the pile, began to read it aloud in his rather drowsy voice:

"The French have crossed the Niemen and have entered the boundaries of Russia"

Maria Alexéevna dropped the yellow shawl she was folding. Nadenka almost choked over her peach.

"The die is cast," Dournoff went on reading, "the French have crossed the Niemen and there can be no more doubt as to their treachery. Read the Emperor's letter to Count Soltykoff. You will see that Alexander has firmly decided to punish Napoleon for his treacherous invasion. The Empress Maria Fedorovna has arrived from Pavlovsk [17] in order to have prayers said for her son's victory. It is now three days since the whole of Europe has moved against us together with Napoleon."

"Good Heavens! Whatever will become of us?" sighed Sophie Meledinsky's old mother.

"It is Frederick Pershaw—you do not know him—who writes to me from St. Petersburg. . . . And here is the Emperor's rescript to the Commander-in-Chief there, Field-Marshal Count Soltykoff. Pershaw sent me that as well."

"Do read it to us, Stepan Fedorovitch, we are all dying to hear it," said little Barbe Poustchin with a sigh. She had completely forgotten, at that moment, how she had been telling everybody, but a little while ago, that her brother had had the "honor" of being presented to Napoleon in Paris.

"Count Nikolai Pavlovitch," read Dournoff solemnly, "the French Army has crossed the frontiers of Russia. This most perfidious attack is the reward of our strict loyalty to our alliance. I have exhausted all means of preserving peace compatible with the dignity of the Throne and the welfare of my people. It is the Emperor Napoleon's unalterable decision to destroy Russia. The most pacific offers on my part have received no answer. This sudden attack clearly demonstrates the falseness of the peaceful promises reiterated by him but a short time ago. There is, therefore, nothing left for me to do

[17] Pavlovsk near Tzarskoié Sélo, in the vicinity of St. Petersburg, with a handsome palace and a beautiful park, was the summer residence of the Dowager Empress Maria Fedorovna.

but to take up arms and employ all means in my power to repulse force by force. My hopes are based on the zeal of my people and the courage of my troops. Threatened in the very heart of their homes, they will defend them with the firmness and courage inherent to them. Providence will bless our righteous cause. The defence of our country, the preservation of our independence, and the honor of our people compel me to war."

Dournoff cleared his throat, took breath, and read the concluding words in a voice rendered firm by inward enthusiasm.

"I shall not lay down my arms so long as a single foe remains within my Empire. I remain your well-wisher [18] Alexander. Vilna, 13th of June, 1812."

Silence reigned in the room. At last Antonsky sighed and spoke:

"We are in the hands of Fate. It will be as it ever was. After two or three weeks of fighting, Napoleon will compel us to sue for peace. He will take several provinces away from us and will restore Poland. This is sad, but, after all, one must admit that it is just. We had no business to take Poland."

Nadenka looked at him with terror. That he should be able to speak so calmly of our defeat seemed to her a sacrilege. Maria Alexéevna took a pair of snuffers from the table and began to snuff the candles.

"All you say, Khariton Ivanovitch," began Kozodéeff suddenly, "is not so dreadful after all. There may be worse things than that in store for us."

"What do you mean? Speak!" said several voices.

"Well, the French will come to Moscow."

"The French will come to Moscow? You go too far!" they all exclaimed.

"Yes, to Moscow, in about three weeks' time."

Sophie Meledinsky's old mother crossed herself and spat aside.[19]

[18] The literal translation would be: "I remain yours benevolently, Alexander." That was the way in which Russian Emperors signed their letters and rescripts.

[19] A superstitious Russian custom, nowadays practised only by common people.

"May the pip smite you!" she said.

"We shall never allow that to happen," Annette Bolkonsky said with sparkling eyes. "I shall put on a helmet and enter the ranks of the militia."

"And I," said Sophie, "shall ask maman to let me tend the wounded." [20]

Barbe declared that she would put on the dress of a pilgrim, a hair-shirt and chains, and would wander from convent to convent and from monastery to monastery, praying the Saints to grant victory to her Emperor.

"And what do you think the French will do to their emigrants if the latter take up arms against them?"

"They will shoot them," said Dournoff calmly. "That is if they are taken prisoners."

"But what, after all, makes you think that the French will take Moscow?" Antonsky asked Kozodéeff.

"Our God-fearing [21] Army is incapable of withstanding Bonaparte," the old man replied. "We speak hotly, but we soon cool down. And it is not the fact of Bonaparte entering Moscow which frightens me most. Knowing our people well, I am afraid much worse things may happen. The peasants are burdened to the utmost with conscription and taxes, and only the land-owners keep them loyal to the Tzar. But the nobles have a grudge against the peasantry because of the talk about liberty which dates from the time of Pougatchoff.[22] This evil has its roots in France and, to tell the truth, it is supported by

[20] "Nurses" belong to a community and are called "sisters of mercy" in Russia. Red Cross nurses did not exist at that time, but there were of course women who tended the wounded in hospitals.

[21] The literal translation would be: "Christ-loving." This epithet was always applied to the army in Russia. The priest in church prayed for the "Christ-loving army" In the English translation of our Liturgy it is called "The Christian Army."

[22] Pougatchoff: A famous Cossack brigand, an imposter and pretender who raised a revolt among the peasantry in the time of Catherine II. He proclaimed himself to be Catherine's murdered husband, Peter III, and asserted that he had escaped from Catherine II and was resolved to redress grievances, give liberty to the peasants and put Catherine in a convent. He was successful for some time, but was defeated in the end by General Michelson, brought in an iron cage to Moscow and executed on Jan. 11th, 1775.

hot-headed people in Russia. Can you imagine what will happen when the French penetrate into the heart of Russia? The peasants will drive the nobles away from their estates, leaving them nothing but the shirts they have on their backs. It will be winter. Where will they go to? To the forests, to be frozen to death or die of hunger there? That's how the state of things in Russia appears to me. Our army is not large. Its leaders have been brought up on parades and know little about real war. The troops have lost their former spirit, and it is said that the French are already prepared to preach liberty to the peasants. I am afraid this war will lead to a popular rising."

"But who will organize it?" asked Antonsky.

"Young hot-heads. That is what modern fashionable philosophy will lead to."

"Do leave off croaking, Alexei Ossipovitch," said Maria Alexéevna. "Look, Nadenka is ready to faint. She has a husband, and I a son and a son-in-law in the army. Let us hope that all will turn out for the best. God is merciful. He will grant victory to our Emperor."

"I should be glad if it were so, but all the omens are bad. I have had a letter telling me that, when a fête was given in honor of our Emperor at Zakret, a gallery built for his use collapsed. Fortunately, nobody was there at the time. The architect disappeared, and only his hat was found on the bank of the Vilia. This is a bad, a very bad omen indeed."

"Don't talk nonsense, old one," Dournoff's old mother, who had been sitting silent in a corner, suddenly said in a severe tone. "You forget that this is Holy Russia. And she is guarded by heavenly forces. God is with us! The Lord Himself and His Holy Mother will save and protect us."

Nadenka did not sleep that night. In the course of the hour she had spent in Dournoff's room in the company of old men and young girls, she had learnt and understood much.

She seemed to hear old Antonsky's cynical laugh as he was taking leave of Dournoff. "No," he had said, "we shall not

die in our armchairs if danger is near. We shall run away at the first sign of it."

Her own Kouzma would not run away from danger. He would look straight into its eyes, and would die if necessary. Her heart filled with pride and at the same time with overwhelming dread at this thought. And it was strange and touching to feel a new life stir beneath her heart. It was as though blades of young grass were already preparing to shoot up through black ashes, where the old grass had been consumed by fire. Life had its own laws, and nothing could arrest them. The war itself, the separation from Kouzma, and all her gloomy forebodings formed part of these laws, and Nadenka wept, and then grew quiet, lying on her back and looking at the painted ceiling of her bedroom with eyes full of tears. She tossed about in bed all night. The morning light shone into the room through the chinks of the shutters and through the white curtains, illuminating the painted ceiling above her head, where winged horses were drawing Aurora's golden chariot along among pink clouds in the blue ether, whilst little Cupids with puffed out cheeks blew long trumpets. Looking at them, Nadenka seemed to see Russia's glory flying along amidst garlands of flowers, to feel that her Kouzma was returning victorious, whilst a row of other bold young faces showed behind him, blending into one long chain. "The defenders of their country," she whispered. And she suddenly felt, with a sharp pang at her heart, what a priceless and precarious treasure that country was. Russia. . . . Its limitless fields, its poor peasant huts, its distant cupolas, passed before her mental vision. "God! How we should love it all!" she thought. Lying in this sumptuous bedroom of Dournoff's house, amidst copies of pictures by Watteau and Greuze and surrounded by all the luxury of gilt frames, rare china and Eastern carpets, she felt her heart glow at the thought of that which was her real, simple Russian country.

When she had risen and was combing the glossy waves of her auburn hair in front of the oval mirror in its Rococo silver frame, its cold glass reflected her face, pale from a sleepless

night, but shining with faith. "No," thought Nadenka, "Russia will not, cannot, perish."

In the morning she went on foot with her maid to the Cathedral of the Annunciation in the Kremlin, and prayed long before the miraculous ikon of Our Saviour, which protects people in their troubles and sends them help. Nadenka knelt before it, making the sign of the cross, pressing her forehead to the wax-spotted carpet and silently waiting for some sign from above.

At home, all was bustle. The Dournoffs were preparing to leave for Rybinsk.[23] Maria Alexéevna also talked of going to her estate Stolpiaguy, but feared Kozodéeff's gloomy predictions. What if the peasants really did drive the landowners away from their estates in winter?

The future, which had always seemed so clear and secure, now loomed ominous and dark.

There were no letters from the front; Kouzma had no time to write. Nadenka, of course, eagerly perused the daily papers, but they did not mention any casualties. The Russian Army was retreating without fighting. The enemy was advancing upon the Russian soil, destroying everything on his way. Kozodéeff's gloomy predictions seemed to be coming true.

Fofo wrote from St. Petersburg that the Emperor was going to Moscow in order to raise a general militia. He advised Maria Alexéevna and Nadenka to return to the capital. Different rumors circulated there. It was said that the English would come to Russia's help, that Karageorge with his Serbians would attack the French from the rear. People said all this, but they knew that no one would ever help Russia, who had always come to everybody's help. They said it just because they were unable to believe it.

The days crawled on, hot, suffocating and full of awe. In the night, a blazing comet with a long tail, the forerunner of disaster and calamity, hung in the dark sky. People foregathered in crowds and looked gloomily heavenward. Moscow was visibly growing empty. Rich people were leaving. It was

[23] A district town on the Volga.

necessary for Maria Alexéevna to decide what she was going to do, and she had not settled anything yet.

Death was striding over ripening corn-fields and forests of pine, fir and oak, approaching Moscow in the smoke and the light of fires. A courier brought news of the glorious battles at Mir and Novogroudk, and of the Russian successes at Kliastitzy and Polotzk. Kouzma had probably taken part in the two former battles and Evgueny in the two latter. But nothing certain was known about the two young men.

The Russians fought and were victorious, but retreated again and again. A dark, distant shadow had spread its wings over Moscow, and something told Nadenka that it would be impossible to escape from it.

X.

THE dispatches brought by Kouzma visibly troubled Bagration. He called his Staff together and began to draft an order of the day concerning the retreat of his army to Minsk.

Having read it aloud and being apparently satisfied with it, Bagration looked over his glasses at Minaieff, who was sitting with his son in a corner of the room.

"Is that all right?" he asked.

"Couldn't be better. Quite in Souvoroff's vein," replied Minaieff.

"And when we retreat, shall it be with music and singing. . . . Eh?"

"Yes, it must be done as our father, Alexander Vassiliévitch Souvoroff, taught us. With music and singing, until we turn round. And then we shall sweep down upon them like eagles."

Bagration looked pleased and smiled.

"Like eagles, you say?"

"Yes, like eagles. . . ." Minaieff repeated.

Bagration was silent for a moment, smoothed the order out with his hand and then spoke to Minaieff:

"I must ask you to do something for me, Minaitch. To-

morrow evening, when we have seen the troops off, ride over to Ataman Platoff. Take him a letter and this order-of-the-day, and have a talk with him. He is offended with me. And take your son with you. It will be nice for you to have him."

"Thank you, your High Excellency. I have another son there, too . . . my youngest son." Tears glistened in old Minaieff's eyes.

On the following day, when the sun was already low and Bagration's open carriage was at the door, the Prince called Minaieff to him.

"There's my letter, Minaitch. And tell the Ataman that Prince Bagration loves him as he always has and always will love him. Tell him to leave off sulking, and do his duty. Tell him that I beg him to be here at Mir by the 29th of June and remain for a time, so as to let my troops rest after the marches to Nesvij. . . . Maievsky, take that. . . ."

Bagration threw the rough draft of his order to the officer, and went on: "If everything is ready, we can start. . . . Good-bye to you, Minaitch, and God speed you."

Bagration left the house to get into the carriage; Maievsky and old Minaieff followed him. Kouzma was already waiting in the courtyard with the saddle-horses.

Bagration removed his headgear, crossed himself and then got into the carriage.

The house, which its proprietors had left the day before, now looked empty and deserted. The escort Hussars of the Akhtyrsky Regiment rode out through the gates in Bagration's wake. Only three horses, already saddled, the Cossack guide, Kouzma, and old Minaieff remained in the courtyard.

The moon was shining brightly in the deserted village street, but the forest which could be seen beyond looked dark in the distance. Kouzma knew that the enemy was still far off, that Bagration's cavalry had not yet passed and that Platoff's Corps must follow, yet this empty village seemed weird and threatening to him in the melancholy light of the moon. It was as though a curtain was being lowered behind them and as though all this,—the distant forest, and the tall mill behind the dam,—would become alien and hostile when the curtain fell.

Old Minaieff took hold of the horse's mane and the pommel in the Kalmuck way, and sank down easily upon the soft, tightly stuffed cushion of the saddle. Kouzma mounted his Vorontchik at a bound. The Cossack pulled at his reins and rode on in front to guide the officers.

"Forward, and God be with us," said the elder Minaieff, giving his fat old horse a touch with the heel.

They rode along marshy forest paths, making their way from post to post of Platoff's flying mail. It was dark in the forest, but the darkness was pierced here and there by moonbeams, which gave it, in some places, the look of niello silver. A strong smell of mushrooms rose from the earth, and an odor as of alcohol came from juniper growing in bogs. The road was almost invisible at times, and old Minaieff became anxious.

"Look here, my friend," he called to the guide, "where are you taking us?"

"Why, to the post."

"And do you know where it is?"

"Of course I do. Can't you see that broken bough? And here's a dead horse's head in a pool of water."

Their mounts were splashing in the dark water of the pool, and a bleached horse's skull showed white in the moonlight.

An hour later, a wood-fire gleamed. The hooting of an owl was heard in that direction, and an answering cry. Beyond the fire was a hut made of green boughs. Horses neighed, scenting strangers, and then came a low call:

"Akimtzeff, is that you? Who is with you?"

"Officers with dispatches for the Ataman."

Men appeared out of the hut. A new guide tightened the riders' saddle-girth, then got on horseback. The first guide cried: "Good luck!" and Minaieff answered with a word of thanks.

The senior Cossack at the post said solicitously to the guide:

"When you pass the house of the forest guard, Sizoff, keep to the right. The road is drier there."

And the night enveloped them once more, with moonbeams darting here and there through the branches, with its scent of resin and spruce, juniper and mushrooms.

Towards morning they stopped at a post near a village which had been abandoned by its inhabitants. They unsaddled their horses, fed them, and then lay down to rest. The Cossacks told them that two Frenchmen had ridden past the day before and had stopped to peep into the hut. They wore helmets with black horse-hair streaming down their backs, and cuirasses. The Cossacks had begun to surround them, but they had noticed it and galloped away. They were caught up and captured, however.

"What did you do with them?" asked Kouzma.

"We took them to Ataman Platoff."

"Is it far from here to his Headquarters?"

"No, we shall ride out after dinner and be there at dawn."

They dined with the Cossacks on soup and dried fish, and after dinner again trotted behind their guide, keeping to the north.

When the moon rose once more from behind the wood in the east, where the sky was of a crystal blue, whilst the sunset still flamed in the west, they were approaching Bakshty. To the right of them were fields, to the left lay the small village of Makssimovka. Just beyond it were a garden and the white walls of a landowner's house.

"Father," said Kouzma, "there is a path to the left leading to that house. The Ataman must be there."

"Why, Kouzma, don't you know the Ataman's ways? He would never take up his quarter in a manor, or even in the village. He always lives in a tent. You just listen."

Old Minaieff checked his horse. A vague murmur of voices came from beyond the wood, where camp-fires were reflected in the darkening sky. Suddenly everything grew silent. Over a dozen bugles sounded the call to evening prayers in different places.

"That's the Ataman," said old Minaieff, taking off his shako.

The hoarse bugle notes died away, and various choirs of

masculine voices began to sing the *Our Father*, sometimes blending into one, and sometimes outdistancing one another.

The sacred words of the prayers sounded so unexpected and solemn in this far-off swampy wood, that Kouzma grew very quiet. He looked at his father. The old man's gray hair had fallen over his temples and forehead, and the evening breeze was playing with it. His sunburnt face with its white moustache had a concentrated and stern expression. His chestnut horse had pricked up its ears and seemed to be listening too.

One bugle after the other sounded again, and the Cossack bivouac once more hummed with voices Minaieff touched up his horse.

The wood suddenly came to an end. The village of Bakshty lay beyond a long dam planted on both sides with willows, which spread their branches, silvery in the moonlight, into the air; and beyond the village was a large clearing surrounded by forests. The ground rose and formed a hillock in the middle of the clearing, crowned by a large, round tent which looked pink in the light of the setting sun. Minaieff rode towards it.

The pole of a large light-blue flag was stuck into the ground near the tent, at the entrance of which stood two sentinels of the Ataman Regiment, wearing greatcoats and leather shakoes. A murmur of voices came from the tent. A tray with tin drinking cups stood on some boxes near its entrance, and two Cossacks were busy pouring dark-red, frothy wine into them. On seeing riders approaching, one man disappeared into the tent and instantly returned.

"Who is there?" came in loud, imperious tones from the tent. "Is it a report?"

A young officer of the Ataman Regiment, in a light-blue jacket with silver shoulder-belt, looked out.

"Colonel Minaieff," he said, turning back.

"Admit him."

The officer lifted the flap and Colonel Minaieff, followed by Kouzma, stepped onto the soft Turksh carpet of the tent. They found themselves in a large round space filled with people. The Ataman rose from a low camp-stool and went forward to greet his old friend.

After the clear light of early evening the interior of the tent seemed quite dark. The light of two candles burning in brass candlesticks fell on a carpet covering an improvised table, probably made of several cartridge-boxes drawn together. The candles threw a dim light on the drinking cups filled with red wine and on the plates containing thick pieces of bread, grayish biscuits and thick slices of cold mutton. All round the table, against the canvas sides of the tent, it was dark and one had to look intently to distinguish faces.

Platoff was dressed in a short kaftan lined with squirrel. It was unbuttoned and devoid of all decorations. The Cross of St. George hung at the Ataman's neck. He wore a shirt of yellowish silk, tucked into his trousers, under the kaftan. Crosses and little silver images jingled under his shirt when he moved.

Platoff had risen from the table and gone forward to greet his guests. His large, deep-set gray eyes had an imperious and yet kindly expression. His slightly hooked nose jutted over a black moustache streaked with gray. Sparse, curly hair lay untidily on his forehead and temples. Although in his sixty-first year, Platoff was still youthfully lithe and quick in his movements. Behind him, limping painfully with his left foot, rose a tall, spare old man with the epaulets of a general and a shock of white hair. Beside him stood handsome, youthful General Ilovaisky and a good-looking, clean-shaven lieutenant in the uniform of the Guards Artillery. Further on, Minaieff recognized Lazareff and stout Captain Smirny, who were the Ataman's aides-de-camp.

When Platoff had warmly embraced Minaieff, strange, guttural sounds came from the rear and Prince Serbedjab-Tiumen, who commanded a squad of the Stavropol Kalmuck Regiment, fell on Kouzma's neck, yelling with delight.

"Good-evening to you, Minaitch. You know everybody here, don't you? But this is a guest, Count Grabbe. He has just been sent here by the Minister, whose A.D.C. he is," said Platoff, introducing the young Guardsman to Minaieff.

Seeing the latter take some papers out of the lining of his shako, the Ataman said, frowning:

"What? I thought you had just come to see me. But you have brought dispatches. From Prince Bagration, I suppose?"

Taking the sealed packet, but without opening it or sitting down, Platoff turned to the young officer of the Ataman Regiment.

"We must send for Ivan. A good officer—everybody likes him in my regiment. Ride to the regimental camp, Konkoff, and tell them to send Khorounjy [24] Ivan Minaieff along."

"Your High Excellency," said the officer, standing at attention. "Khorounjy Ivan Minaieff has gone on reconnaissance duty with Colonel Balabin, of General Kouteinikoff's brigade."

"Well, it can't be helped. You'll have to wait a bit, Minaitch. You will stay with me for a while?" Platoff took up a small Caucasian dagger and cut the envelope open.

"Gavrilytch!" he called.

An old Cossack stepped gloomily from the farther end of the tent.

"We must give the Colonel and the Cornet something to eat, Gavrilytch. Prepare some field-*kasha* [25] with chicken and kidneys. You understand? And stable their horses with mine."

"All right," the Cossack said with a morose air, and left the room.

Platoff sat down on his chair. Smirny moved the candles nearer and the Ataman, having set his spectacles on his nose, opened the envelope and began to read Bagration's letter. All kept silence, scanning the Ataman's face. At first it looked frowning and angry, then suddenly a muscle twitched and a satisfied smile began to spread over his features.

"His High Excellency writes," said Platoff, "that he is marching to Nesvij and that we must march to Novogroudk. . . . But who knows whether we shall be able to pass? What if Jerôme's Polish cavalry is there already? . . . Well, we shall see about that to-morrow. Now I drink to your health, my dear guests."

[24] Same rank as cornet. In Cossack regiments they were called "khorounjy."

[25] A kind of porridge.

It was about three in the morning when all dispersed to their tents. Only Minaieff and his son, and the Ataman's aides-de-camp, Lazareff and Smirny, remained with him. The candles were still burning. Minaieff knew that Platoff never went to bed before dawn during a campaign.

"Are you tired, Minaitch?" Platoff asked.

"No, why should I be tired? Let's have a talk, Ataman."

"Let's have one, old friend We both belong to Souvoroff's time and understand each other almost without words. You go to bed, young man," he said to Kouzma. "You are young and need sleep. Why, you can hardly keep your eyes open. . . ." Then, turning to Smirny and Lazareff, he added: "And you too, gentlemen, are free to retire if you like. We'll sit up a bit, my friend and I."

Kouzma's bed was laid on a heap of straw in a corner of the Ataman's tent. The young man was shy of undressing at first, but at last took off his jacket, trousers and boots as unnoticeably as he could, covered his feet with his *bourka*[26] and his chest with his red jacket, put his fist under his cheek and instantly fell asleep with the deep, peaceful slumber of youth. Smirny and Lazareff retired behind the curtain where they slept. At first one could hear them talk in undertones and strike the steel, and a whiff of tobacco came from behind the curtain. But soon all grew silent there.

Platoff pushed the tin drinking cups and plates aside, flicked the crumbs off the table with his handkerchief, took a map from under his pillow and unfolded it on the table.

"Prince Bagration was angry with me for not having gone to Dorokhoff's help," he said in a low voice, "but now he writes that I must march to Nikolaev, cross the Niemen there, and hurry on to Novogroudk and to Mir."

"When will you start, Ataman?"

"To-morrow."

Minaieff had a long look at the map.

"Do you think you will have time to pass?"

"I must manage to pass, for Prince Bagration calls me, and I have faith in him. He is one of us, of Souvoroff's men.

[26] Sleeveless felt cloak.

I'll smash through at any cost. I have questioned the Polish prisoners brought in to-day from Novogroudk—an officer and two Uhlans of Rojnetzky's division. They have their own way of forming regiments in Poland. Whoever raises enough men for a regiment at his own cost is given the command, even if he cannot make head or tail of things military. And they are a proud and hot-headed lot. Pan [27] Rojnetzky and Pan Kaminsky have already quarreled as to who should first have the honor of giving us a drubbing."

The silence that reigns before dawn pervaded the tent and the bivouac. The candles shed their light on the face of Kouzma, flushed with youthful sleep. His jacket flung back from his chest, he lay clutching his cross and the little bag containing earth from the Don which hung from his neck. His father looked at him admiringly, and a gentle smile flitted over his sunburnt, wrinkled face.

"Nice boys you have, Minaitch," said Platoff. "I have grown to love your Ivan. But this one is a nice young fellow too. Which of them do you love best?"

"I love them equally," sighed Minaieff. "They are both my sons, bequeathed to me by my dear, dead wife. God did not let her live long enough to see them as grown-up, regular Cossacks, or to fasten an officers' epaulets to their kaftans."

"You can't love them both equally," said Platoff. "I have several daughters. When I send them presents, I always try to choose equally nice things for them. Still, there is one who is the most caressing, the most obliging and the most obedient, and she is the dearest of them all, I think. My first thought when I get up is for her, and so is my last thought at night. Which of them comes first with you, Kouzma or Ivan?"

The light was beginning to steal into the tent; its tightly stretched canvas ceiling was paling. A trumpet hoarsely sounded the reveille. As the time for watering them approached, the horses began to neigh.

"Kouzma . . ." whispered Minaieff, covering his mouth with his palm so that no words should reach his son's ear. "Ah! I do love my Kouzma! He is the pride and glory of our race.

[27] Polish for "Mr."

He has married a Russian girl [28] of good family in St. Petersburg, and he is in the Life-Guards Cossacks. He will bring honor to our name. But I can't help feeling that, living there, in St. Petersburg, he is cut off from us all. . . . And his family will only be half ours. . . . You understand me, Ataman? Ivan . . . well, somehow Ivan is nearer to me. He is more quiet than Kouzma, less turbulent. I want him to marry as well, and know who his sweetheart is. It is Liouba, the daughter of our priest, the priest of our stanitza. She is a treasure. And they have long loved each other with a deep and steadfast love. I asked him whom he would like me to approach as a bride for him, and he answered: 'I shall marry whomever you choose, Father. . . .' Well I have spoken to Liouba's parents, and they have given their consent. You should have seen how happy he was, Ataman. If God grant that we survive the war, there will be a merry wedding. . . . And I, old man that I am, will have the happiness of holding his children in my arms."

Platoff sat thoughtfully looking at the map. His eyes were half closed and he seemed to be dozing.

"Yes," he said at length. "Both are nice young fellows. Yet you may be right. The eldest is more brilliant, but Ivan is nearer to us, somehow."

A tear glistened in Minaieff's left eye.

"Well," he said, "and if it should happen that . . . on the battlefield . . . God's will be done. . . . Our fathers willingly gave up their nearest and dearest for the sake of their country . . . and I shall do the same."

"You are right. God's will must come first," said Platoff. He rose from his chair and approached the couch. "Let us sleep, Minaitch. Thank God, the night has been quiet."

[28] Cossacks are Russians, of course. Still, at that time some difference existed.

XI.

THE enemy was obviously advancing. For several days past, the Cossacks had been meeting isolated Frenchmen and had even taken some of them prisoners. But those were vanguard detachments, which rapidly disappeared into the woods at the Cossacks' approach. Now, however, the latter came up against considerable numbers when pursuing them, and wherever the country was open they saw tall columns of dust rising on the Grodno highway, up to the very horizon.

The spacious undulating plain, covered with fields of rye already in the ear, and intersected by the broad high-way with tufted and ancient birches and the long row of houses belonging to the village of Simakovo, had been peacefully dozing in the afternoon sun but a moment ago. Now it suddenly swarmed with Cossack troops.

To the left, stretching out in a many-colored wavy line to the very foot of a big hillock, the Perekop [29] Tartars rode at a medium trot through a sea of waving rye, with irrigular intervals between their squadrons. With handsome quivers at the shoulder and glittering curved swords, they wore yellow, pink, green or white silk caps and multi-colored Oriental robes. Three Cossack field regiments, commanded by Syssoieff and two Ilovaiskys [30] and consisting of fifteen squadrons, all the men dressed alike in dark-blue jackets with black shoulder-belts, riding at regular intervals between the squadrons, lance on hip, moved to the right of the Tartars, approaching with their right flank the first houses of Simakovo. Part of the village was already occupied by the variegated squadrons of the Stavropol Kalmucks in their shaggy sheepskin caps, while the blue ranks of the Ataman Regiment were entering another part of it in

[29] A town on the isthmus connecting the Crimea with the continent.
[30] "Ilovaisky" was a very common name among the Cossacks.

perfect alignment and rather flaunting the order in which they rode.

Behind them, surrounded by trumpeters and orderly officers rode Platoff himself under the light-blue regimental banner which bore the image of Our Saviour. Kouzma formed part of the Ataman's retinue.

When they had ridden up the slopes of Simakovo, the whole valley of the river Ousha and the stream Mirenka became visible as far as the very horizon. About two versts to their front were the thin transparent chains of General Ilovaisky's Regiment, the last curtain dividing them from the enemy. Beyond them, clouds of dust showed where the Polish Uhlans were moving out of Mir.

The Poles were preparing to accept battle.

The Stavropol Kalmucks were the first to rush at one of the advancing Uhlan regiments, yelling, whooping and uttering wild cries, shooting their arrows as they sped along. The Uhlans also broke into a gallop and rushed forward to meet the Kalmucks. The latter, however, avoided the attack and galloped back helter-skelter beyond Simakovo, followed by the squadrons of the Ataman Regiment.

Platoff checked his horse. A tall general of Hussars with a red, sunburnt face rode up to him. Platoff looked at him sideways and turned his eyes again to the Polish squadrons which were advancing in good order not more than a verst away.

"Prince," said Platoff, turning to the general, "it is your turn. . . ."

The general rode down the slope at such a pace that the wind bent the aigrette of his tall cap and blew his red pelisse aside.

His hoarse word of command to the Hussars reached Kouzma muffled by the wind.

At that very moment, the twelve guns of the Don Cossacks, unlimbered, appeared on the hillock. Clouds of white smoke enveloped them and the roar of the cannonade drowned all other sounds.

The Akhtyrsky Hussars and the squadrons of the Ataman

Regiment, who had returned to the attack, met the White Uhlans and drove them back. Other Uhlan regiments, with red, blue, and yellow plastrons, hastened to the rescue of the fugitives. Polish guns roared from beyond Mir and their cannon-balls whistled among the galloping Polish and Cossack squadrons.

Twenty-four heavy guns were thundering behind Mir, and the entire valley was enveloped in white smoke as in a mist. It seemed to Kouzma that the whole battlefield was also shrouded in white and everything appeared to be vague and indistinct as in a dream.

Four Cossacks were carrying a tall, stout, handsome-looking general. Platoff rode up to him.

"General Ilovaisky 5th," he said, turning to old Minaieff who was riding behind him. "Where are you hit?" he asked the wounded man.

The general raised his pale, swollen face and stammered:

"A bullet in the leg. . . . And a bad sword-cut in the arm. . . . Damn the fellow!"

They had just carried away the general when a Cossack galloped up to Platoff, holding something silvery and quivering high above his head. It was a Polish general's epaulet with a short, thick fringe of bullion.

"I tore this off the shoulder of Turno [31] himself, Ataman!" he cried. All the left side of the man's face was smeared with blood and his fair, sun-bleached hair was clotted with it.

Lazareff took the epaulet and the retinue examined it. Platoff said without looking:

"Thank you, my brave fellow."

"At your service, your High Excellency. If his bodyguard had not come galloping up to his rescue, I should have taken him alive."

But Platoff was not listening. His eyes had turned towards the east and a shadow had stolen over his face.

The battle tumult rose and sank and rose again. Cavalry hurled itself against cavalry and separated, leaving dead horses and dead men on the field. Then guns thundered with increased

[31] Count Turno, a Polish general.

violence on both sides, whilst musketry-fire rattled near Mir and in the bushes behind it. Regiments dressed their lines anew and once more rushed at each other, one living mass trying to force its way through another living mass

Far away behind Mir tall columns of dust rose above the road, coming nearer and nearer. Fresh regiments were hastening to the help of the Poles.

Platoff turned and called young Minaieff. The Ataman's tired face was gray and his eyes had no light in them.

"Kouzma," he said. "Hasten to Podlessié on the road to Mkhi and find General Kouteinikoff's brigade. He must get here as quickly as he can and attack the Poles on the flank and in the rear."

"Yes, sir!" cried Kouzma. "I understand."

As he rode away, his father seized him by the arm. His face was as gray as the Ataman's and tears glistened in his faded eyes.

"Have a look at our Vania there. Tell him I send him my blessing."

"All right, father," said Kouzma and galloped straight across the fields towards the village of Podlessié.

Hardly had he reached the wide forest road than the silence of the wood enveloped him, seeming so strange after the roar of cannon and the noise and din of battle. It was extraordinary to think that there, quite near to him, foemen were meeting, driving lances into each other, slashing each other with swords, and that the heaps of slain Cossacks and Poles were increasing. Against his will, this silence and the feeling of safety were sweet. Tired Vorontchik changed his pace to a trot. The sound of firing was becoming more and more indistinct, changing to a vague, dull hum. . . . Soon he ceased to hear it altogether.

The ancient forest was silent. The tops of the tall trees swayed and murmured gently, and somewhere a cuckoo called.

At a turn of the road two Cossacks came trotting towards Kouzma. They stopped, and one of them dropped his lance in sheer surprise at this unexpected meeting.

Kouzma could hardly speak from joyous emotion. At last he cried out:

"Do you belong to General Kouteinikoff's brigade?"

"Yes, your Honor."

"Is it near here, or not?"

"Over yonder. . . ."

In a straight opening between the tall pine trees on either side of the road, the blue stream of the "Atamantzy" appeared. They wore their field shakos, and their blue jackets were gray with dust. At their head rode a general in a dark-blue *tchekmen* without epaulets. Kouzma rode up to him, saluted, and transmitted Platoff's order.

"Quick-trot!" commanded the general.

After this order he began to question Kouzma as to what Platoff was doing. Kouzma was unable to relate anything coherently.

"A battle is going on there," he said. "It has already been going on for over five hours. The Ataman awaits you with impatience."

The general looked at the sky and quickened his horse's pace. The trumpeters who followed him galloped faster.

Colonel Balabin, the officer commanding the Ataman Regiment,[32] shook Kouzma's hand warmly.

"Your father is with Platoff?"

"Yes, sir. And where is our Ivan?"

"Here, in the first troop of the third squadron."

"May I see him? My father asked me to do so."

"Certainly, but ride back at once. You will show me the way."

Kouzma turned into the forest and stopped, letting the squadrons go past him. They rode at a quick trot, bending forward on their horses' necks. They looked at him sternly and, so it seemed to him, with disapproval.

Ah! here came the third squadron. . . .

The bay horse under the old squadron commander threw out

[32] There were 10 squadrons in the Ataman Regiment. In the battle of Mir, 5 squadrons were with Platoff and 10 were in General Kouteinikoff's detachment.

its legs widely. A trumpeter followed, and then came the dense ranks of four columns each. Ivan rode at the flank of his squadron.

It was the first time Kouzma had seen his brother riding with his men, and his heart swelled with pride at the sight of him. Ivan, who was almost as tall as Kouzma himself, but more fair, with large, clear and still childish-looking eyes, rode a thick-set chestnut horse. His silver shoulder-belt, with its blue threads, glistened on his slender boyish chest; his shako with a blue flap sat firmly on his dusty hair.

"Kouzma!"

Ivan's face lit up with joy. They rode on side by side. Kouzma wanted to embrace his brother, but was shy of doing so before the Cossacks.

"Well? Are we going to fight?" asked Ivan.

"Yes, they pin all their hope on you."

"Is Father there?"

"Yes, with Platoff."

"I hope we come in time. We'll not disgrace ourselves."

Kouzma wanted to tell his brother that their father sent him his blessing, and wanted to bless the lad himself, but he somehow did not dare. And old sergeant, with whiskers and a prickly moustache, and with chevrons on his blue sleeve, rode beside Ivan, and Kouzma felt shy of speaking of this before him.

"Well, good-bye, Ivan," he said.

"What? Are you off already?"

"I must show the way."

Kouzma galloped off, outdistancing the Ataman squadron. The head of the column was already debouching from the forest. General Kouteinikoff galloped out first, at top speed, then checked his horse. Shading his eyes with the palm of his hand he looked straight ahead to where the village of Simakovo lay. The Cossacks had already left it, and the Polish brigade was advancing on the village. The Don's heavy guns were firing into it at short intervals.

"Cornet of the Life-Guards Cossacks!" Kouteinikoff cried to Kouzma. "Get to the Ataman as quickly as you can. Tell

him I am attacking in strength on the flank and from the rear."

Kouzma galloped off, and after about half a verst turned to look back. All Colonel Balabin's squadrons had deployed over the green field. To the right of them the Cossacks of a field regiment were ascending the hillock. He had a glimpse of the red stripes on their trousers as they took up their formation.

For a moment Kouzma thought he could distinguish his brother Ivan's slender figure on his chestnut horse, in front of the blue squadron.

"God help them . . ." flashed through his mind.

He sped on without looking back any more. Behind him rose a tumult of threatening cries mingled with the beat of hoofs, drowned occasionally by the roar of the cannon. As he rode up to Platoff, he heard, through all these noises of battle, the Russian trumpeters sounding a call which told him that the Poles had been beaten and were being pursued.

Kouzma found Platoff immediately beyond Simakovo. The Ataman was lying on the ground, his dark-blue uniform unbuttoned. A little further on, his aide-de-camp Lazareff and old Gavrilytch were spreading out a carpet. Horses bearing the Ataman's packs stood close by. Smirny sat on his heels by the Ataman's side, holding a pencil and note-book ready for dictation. Platoff listened absent-mindedly. Old Minaieff went up to his son and began to question him about Ivan as soon as Platoff had turned away.

Meanwhile Platoff dictated:

"After the engagement which lasted for over six hours and during which I never dismounted once, I write this lying on the grass, very weary. I report. . . ."

On the road to the left of the village, surrounded by a cloud of dust, the Kalmucks were driving a large party of prisoners before them.

The "Atamantzy" were passing between the houses. All the ten squadrons had now united. Over the whole of the field beyond the village other regiments could be seen forming into

columns. The setting sun was lighting them up with its pink rays and sparkling on the shining points of their lances.

Old Minaieff could hardly keep still in his agitation, gazing fixedly at the approaching Ataman Regiment. It halted. A light breeze blew the dust aside and the squadrons could be seen drawn up in a line, the blue lances resting on the men's shoulders. Lit up from behind by the setting sun, the Atamantzy seemed to be framed in gold.

Old Minaieff descended the slope with rapid, stumbling steps and approached the regiment Kouzma followed him. He looked at the first troop of the third squadron, headed by the old sergeant with the prickly moustache, who rode his roan horse with a straw-colored mane and forelock. The right sleeve of his jacket was black with blood. Ivan was not beside him.

His father went up to Colonel Balabin and asked him a question. Then he jerked off his leather shako, crossed himself, and walked off between the second and third squadrons. The sun turned his thick white hair to gold. His shoulders and head were bent and he walked with uneven steps over the crushed and trampled rye.

Isolated Cossacks were riding across the field behind the regiment. Kouzma caught sight of one and had no glance to spare for the others. Across the horse's neck lay the body of an officer with helplessly dangling arms and fair hair loosely hanging down. The Cossack rider supported the body with his arm. An officer's shako hung by its chin-strap on the pommel of the saddle, its blue flap lying on the dead man's breast.

Kouzma saw the jacket of fine, thin blue cloth, the long cartridge-case edged with silver and stamped with the silver eagle, he saw the back of the young man's head with its drooping hair, the familiar parting on the crown of the head and the golden tips of the hair. . . . One arm was swinging feebly. The fists were clenched and the hands of a dead, waxen hue. Kouzma felt the tears come to his eyes. He tried not to believe what he saw, tried not to recognize his brother, but could not

but do so. He checked his pace, as though to put off the terrible moment.

His father went up to the Cossack. The man dismounted and Minaieff helped him to lay the body on the ground. The small moustache and downy eyebrows seemed glued to the waxen face, which bore an expression of wonder. The young officer's breast was black with blood; his jacket was torn and hung in tatters.

Old Minaieff knelt down beside his son's body. Kouzma went up to his father and also sank on his knees beside him. They remained thus, silently looking at their dead Ivan, killed in battle. With an indifferent air, the Cossack cleaned blood off the saddle with his sleeve and nails.

The old man seemed aware of nobody's presence. His face was gray and his lips trembled. Strange hoarse sounds broke from his chest. Kouzma had never seen his father look like that.

"Go and tell the Ataman . . . that Vania has been killed."

He burst into tears and threw himself on his son's body.

Kouzma threaded his way up the slope between the Ataman squadrons. Tears were choking him, but he thought all the Cossacks were looking at him and walked on, trying to be calm and to show the dignity of a Cossack who understands what death on the battlefield means.

Platoff was still dictating to Smirny, interlarding his dictation with remarks addressed to Lazareff and Gavrilytch.

"A hundred and fifty of the lower ranks. . . . Have you got that down? Our casualties are great, but not so very heavy considering that this was an uncommon engagement, where men fought hand to hand. . . ." He turned to Gavrilytch: "Try to get as many drinking-cups as you possibly can. The colonels are all coming to supper. What about Ivan? Is he all right?" he asked as Kouzma came up.

"He has been killed," answered Kouzma.

"God rest his soul!" said Platoff in a low voice, making the sign of the cross. Then he added shrilly: "But this is our private concern. . . ."

He turned again to Gavrilytch:

"Don't uncork the wine just yet. Wait till everybody has arrived. Let the bottles cool in pails of water."

Platoff raised his head and saw old Minaieff coming towards him, walking with heavy, tottering steps. He rose.

"This is our private concern," he said to Kouzma. "We shall weep at home. The heart of our most gracious Sovereign must not be troubled with our grief."

He went rapidly forward to meet Minaieff and embraced him.

XII.

On its march towards St. Petersburg, André Réville's Brigade (which belonged to Marshal Oudinot's 2d Corps) had now come to Polotzk. After six months' absence abroad, the young man got on even better with his fellow-officers, loved his regiment more than ever and felt intensely proud of the eighteen decorations just received by it, seven of which fell to the lot of his own squadron. The 6th Bavarian Corps, under General St. Cyr, was expected at any moment, and that, said Captain Marbot, who was in command of André's regiment, could only signify an advance for which both young men thanked Heaven. They were sick of playing hop-scotch with Wittgenstein, an opponent who could not even set twenty-five thousand men against the fifty thousand of Oudinot and Macdonald.

It was true that the Corps approaching Polotzk consisted of Bavarians, not Frenchmen, but their General was St. Cyr, the cool, ruthless man who believed in his star, the incredibly lucky upstart who had merely been a volunteer in Revolutionary days. When there was no fighting to be done, he cared more for playing the fiddle than for the health and comfort of his troops, never visited them in hospital—did not, in fact, inquire whether they had hospitals or not. But when it came to strategy, St. Cyr was a genius. Before Napoleon rose to power revolutionary forms of government came and went, yet nothing untoward happened to St. Cyr. He was well hated.

nevertheless it was always to him that difficult military tasks were entrusted.

"His arrival is significant," said Captain Marbot to André.

"But," objected the latter, "Marshal Oudinot's rank is higher than St. Cyr's."

"Even where rank is concerned, St. Cyr will achieve his object, believe me. Who knows—he may have been sent here to get his Marshal's baton."

In a couple of days matters fell out to St. Cyr's advantage. Blandly, respectfully, and almost in silence, he had refused to give Oudinot the advice tacitly asked for, sardonically watching the Marshal hesitate and blunder where he himself would have achieved victory. Then Oudinot was ingloriously wounded whilst visiting orchards where sharpshooters, both French and Russian, nested, and went into a Lithuanian hospital in the rear. Before doing so, he handed over the command of both Corps to St. Cyr.

This news reached the General in a cell of the Catholic Monastery of St. Valentine, where, having arranged some sheets of music on a stand found in the monastery, he was preparing to play the violin.

On hearing the report of his Chief of Staff, sleepiness and indifference at once left St. Cyr's face. It was no longer a wrinkled mask. The eyes widened, became animated with deep and stubborn thought. He gave the order to summon all commanders immediately. When the officer had left the cell, St. Cyr put desk and fiddle away, spread a map on the table, lit two candles, shut the window, let down the blind and became sunk in thought.

Three hours went by, before the Chief of Staff reported the presence, in the monastery refectory, of senior officers of the 2d and 6th Corps. Still wearing the blue civilian frock-coat in which he had arrived, one hand thrust into a pocket of plain black trousers, St. Cyr went to meet the glittering array of generals and colonels. A hush fell on the candle-lit, low-vaulted hall of the monastery as he entered.

Captain Marbot, who stood to the left of General Castex, could hardly recognize St. Cyr. The ex-actor was now playing the part of a leader and a hero. Power and the will to do had transformed him. Marbot even thought: "If St. Cyr is an actor, he certainly is a first-rate one."

St. Cyr greeted nobody and did not even pay the professional compliments that Napoleon never forgot to utter. Responding carelessly to the low bows of the commanding officers, he attacked the subject at once.

"Our Army," he said, "is in a desperate position. Part of the troops are on the other side of the river, part in gardens and orchards whence they fire to no purpose. But half the artillery is in position. The streets of the town are blocked with war material, transport carts, and wounded, so that neither man nor horse can pass. There is only a single bridge, and that too narrow, over the Dvina. Darkness has come on. The various detachments are inextricably mixed and do not even understand one another's language. Should the enemy attack during the night, a catastrophe would be inevitable."

St Cyr's glance swept everybody in turn, as though to say: "There! That is what your Marshal has brought about!"

All kept silence, though many distressed sighs arose. No reply was possible. Yet as St. Cyr spoke, it seemed to his audience that, although the game was apparently lost, a master had taken command and might save the situation even now.

St. Cyr's voice rose confident and precise:

"You will dispatch adjutants, without losing a moment, to have all sharpshooters in orchards and gardens removed across the river—to the devil, if you like! They are doing harm, not good. When they stop firing, the Russians will stop too. Is that clear?"

As soon as the noise and movement connected with the adjutants' departure had died down, St. Cyr went on:

"You will all mount immediately, gentlemen, take out patrols, and have the goodness to clear the town by morning. Unwounded soldiers must be sent to bivouacs, and order created in their units. Dispatch the wounded to hospitals, and have the dead buried. No transport carts must be allowed near the

bridge. I myself—you understand me?—myself will ride through the town at dawn. Remember that I shall accept no excuses then and shall know how to exact obedience. Commander of the engineers!"

The officer thus addressed clicked his spurs together and bowed.

"You are to strengthen the bridge, and build one on barrels near it for infantry. Everything must be ready by noon. The other commanders must get cavalry and artillery across to this bank in the night, to those suburbs which are furthest from the enemy. The infantry must be sent into bivouac beyond the town. Let the men rest, feed, and sleep well. I shall attack at six o'clock to-morrow afternoon."

"Excuse me, General," said Oudinot's Chief of Staff. "But what if the Russians attack at dawn?"

St. Cyr looked contemptuously and coldly at the speaker.

"Have no fear!" he said. "Poles who are devoted to our Emperor have informed me regarding the state of the Russian Army, which is no better than ours. Wittgenstein is awaiting strong reinforcements from St. Petersburg, Guards cavalry and Cossacks."

Approaching a window, St. Cyr opened a casement, letting in the fresh air of the night. Far away, the glow of camp-fires flickered in the dark woods.

"General Wittgenstein is licking his wounds. Let us take advantage of this interval to reduce things to order."

Precisely at six in the afternoon of the 6th of August, a single cannon-shot boomed from the French lines. Instantly, the whole artillery of both Corps gave the signal to attack, by firing at the Russians a salvo from sixty guns.

The 26th Light Infantry Regiment, followed by two Divisions of Foot, attacked the orchards where Russians still lurked, drove them out, and, re-forming into orderly columns, hastened towards the enemy's camp with colors flying and drums beating.

In the Russian camp all was quiet.

XIII.

It was not Wittgenstein's intention to attack that day. He was, as St. Cyr had said, awaiting reinforcements of cavalry from St. Petersburg. Squadrons of Horse-Guards, Cuirassiers and Life-Guards Hussars, under the command of Colonel Protassoff of the Horse-Guards, were marching from there. Moreover, the occupation of Polotzk did not form part of his Army's task It only had to prevent the French from reaching St. Petersburg, and engagements near Polotzk were merely intended to retard Oudinot's advance as much as possible.

Wittgenstein understood as well as St. Cyr that, if engagements were to be decided by cavalry and lance, it was a dangerous thing to lurk in gardens and orchards, where it was impossible to turn or to form up properly, and there to indulge in desultory and unprofitable shooting. He therefore removed his troops from the outskirts of Polotzk, where they had been for some time during the night, and took up a position on an almost flat plain near the Nevel road, fronting the Manor of Pristenitza. Here fields of reaped and stacked rye, alternating with dry and sandy tracts, sloped towards the Dvina in the neighborhood of the Monastery of St. Valentine. Here Wittgenstein formed a camp, disposing at the left flank the Infantry Division of Major-General Berg and Colonel Vlastoff's Infantry, with three squadrons of the Grodno Hussars, and at the right flank General Hamen's Division. His own Staff was accommodated at the *Vollwark* [33] of Pristenitza. His reserves—the troops of Prince Repnin-Wolkonsky and Colonel Protassoff were already approaching them by the forest road from the village of Ropna—took up their position in the rear.

The morning went by in tense expectation of Oudinot's attack, the soldiers in the camps being wakened at dawn. They were in full uniform, knapsacks packed and piled beside their stacked muskets. Fatigue parties were busy dispatching the

[33] Small estate.

wounded to hospital and burying the dead, although ready to spring to arms at any moment.

Yet the morning—that usual time for attacks to attack—passed quietly. The sun rose towards the zenith, it began to get hot, and the cooks were ordered to prepare cabbage-soup and *kasha*.[34] Uniforms and muskets were laid aside, men raided vegetable gardens for cabbage. Freshly killed meat was sent from the manor. Puffs of smoke from cooking fires, and the odor of cabbage-soup arose everywhere, making everybody involuntarily relax. Mouths opened in a yawn, uniforms unbuttoned of themselves. Sheaves were carried off to form a pillow, whilst here and there shelters of straw or branches were built against the sun.

Hard work continued to occupy the Staff at Pristenitza. But when a Cossack from the flankers'-chain rode up at three o'clock and reported that all the French baggage-trains and part of their artillery, accompanied by Cuirassiers and Chasseurs-à-cheval, had re-crossed the Dvina to enter the woods, and when another Cossack reported the same thing for the remaining wagons, on the other side of Polotzk, the Staff assumed that Oudinot's Army was retiring. Then an adjutant was struck with the brilliant idea of giving the officers of the newly arrived detachments a dinner to celebrate the event, more especially as it was the Feast of the Transfiguration and many officers of the regiment of that name [35] were on the Staff. This notion received an official blessing, and the manor hummed with activity of a non-military kind.

Cupboards and sideboards were ransacked for crockery and table linen; cellars were raided. Officers kept appearing on the porch, with cries for men to carry tables, for smart fellows to help wait at table, or for somebody to obtain a sucking-pig from the Cossacks. The lower ranks shed their jackets so as to work more at ease, and ran errands willingly.

The whole manor boiled with hurry and bustle about five

[34] Porridge. Cabbage-soup with meat were the ordinary diet of the Russian soldier. They are the national Russian food.

[35] The Regiment of the Transfiguration or "Preobrajensky" Regiment, taking its name from "Preobrajenié" or "Transfiguration."

o'clock. Guests arrived, in the shape of regimental commanders who had left juniors to take their places. Bands made their appearance. A table for forty had been laid in the largest hall of the manor and smartly dressed soldiers stood by to assist in the waiting.

Dinner proceeded. The celebration was at its height, with the toasts of the Emperor, the Commander-in-Chief, and Colonel Protassoff already honored, and Colonel Protassoff himself, tall, ruddy and fresh looking, in his cuirass and buckskins, had just risen, champagne-glass in hand, to respond to the toast, when a single shot was heard, followed by the loud boom of a cannonade.

So unexpected was the sound, that at first all took it for thunder.

There was a rush to the window to make sure, but the sky, which had been covered with soft pink clouds in the morning, was now quite clear, of a greenish blue, beyond the distant woods. The white walls and golden crosses of the monastery shone in the sunlight.

The thunder of cannon was repeated, and this time no one could be mistaken. Thick dust drifted low about the monastery. Bayonets gleamed through this dust cloud, and right and left of it, French Infantry was rapidly descending towards the river Polota. Columns of pink dust rose in the fields beyond Polotzk and moved as rapidly towards the town. The cavalry which had left Polotzk at three of the afternoon was speeding back.

"What the prisoner said this morning must be true," thought Wittgenstein. "He said that Oudinot had been wounded and St. Cyr had taken his place. This sort of thing does not suggest Oudinot at all"

He turned to the officers and spoke quietly:

"Gentlemen, please return to your posts. Battalions must be drawn up in chessboard formation in camp, and the cavalry prepare to attack."

The hall emptied.

Taking the field glass that an adjutant was holding, Wittgenstein stared through it in the direction of Polotzk. The French infantry, with the blue and white colours of its uni-

forms and the gold of its drums, was rapidly pouring into the gardens and suburbs. Bending forward in their saddles, Cossacks were galloping away from the town, followed by Russian Chasseurs of the flankers' chain There was a great confusion in the Russian infantry-camp, where the order just given by Wittgenstein had obviously been disregarded Wittgenstein saw that, instead of drawing up in chessboard formation in camp and meeting the enemy with battle-fire and bayonet, the 2d Foot-Chasseurs, the Toula and Esthonian Regiments, the Battalion of the Tenginsky Regiment and the entire Division of General Berg, were streaming past the manor, retreating, some marching in orderly fashion, some in absolute disorder, crowded together and out of step, the guns of the Field Artillery rumbling along in their midst. The field was rapidly emptying. Only one battalion of an infantry regiment stood immoveable, presenting an orderly square to the advancing foe.

Even without his field glass Wittgenstein could now see the Bavarians advancing to the right, another Bavarian Division in the center, and a French one to the left. He could even distinguish their uniforms and regimental colors. The advancing battalions marched well, and the Bavarians were strapping fellows.

As to his own troops, Wittgenstein could see that General Berg's Division had retired beyond Pristenitza, whilst Colonel Vlastoff was occupying a thicket on the Nevel road.

"That's not what I wanted—not what I wanted at all," Wittgenstein thought irritably. "What *are* they about? Have they gone mad? . . . They'll be driven into the wood."

He stepped away from the window and began to give orders for a counter-attack. Chief of Staff, adjutants, and orderly officers looked pale, and seemed to vanish with too great an alacrity. The yard stood empty in a twinkling. He could now hear the loud rattle of a battalion-fire outside the windows.

Smoke and dust hid the horizon. The enemy's troops were quite close to Pristenitza, and it seemed to Wittgenstein that he could hear the crunch of marching feet. In clouds of dust behind the infantry, he saw the French Chasseurs-à-cheval extend.

Nothing now barred the enemy's way. Where the Russian camp had been, a solitary battalion continued to stand four-square and fire as before Four divisions surrounded it. So feeble and insignificant was it, in this huge sea of Bavarians and Frenchmen, that the enemy streamed by almost unheeding, eager to reach Pristenitza. Wittgenstein thought of sending to discover what the battalion was, but instantly told himself that no one would live to find out.

Seven guns that had been standing in position before Pristenitza had already been taken by the French, who were now quite close. Wittgenstein ran to a window giving onto a back yard of the manor, where a battalion of the Sevsky Regiment should have been on guard. He shouted in vain, for not a man stood there. The only living thing was a little Cossack horse, tied up near the cellar.

The front gates of the manor were already giving way under the attack of Legrand's Infantry Division. Wittgenstein sprang through the window, mounted the Cossack horse, and galloped after the retreating Sevtzy.[36] As he crossed the field towards the Nevel road, a single thought kept hammering insistently in his brain: "What can this solitary battalion be, which has remained to die on the battlefield?"

XIV.

THE Battalion of the Toula Foot-Chasseurs which stood like a rock in a stormy sea, among the waves of the attacking French infantry, was temporarily commanded by Lieutenant Evgueny Ogloblin.

He had left the Baltic Fleet and entered the Toula Regiment in February, soon after Kouzma's wedding. And in that regiment the well-born, well-to-do and handsome young fellow had immediately felt himself alone. Its roughly mannered officers, who had either risen from the ranks or were of no particular birth, avoided the dandified, uncommunicative and

[36] Men of the Sevsky Regiment.

"educated" Evgueny He did not drink, did not play cards, was always sober at regimental festivities, did not pay court to the officers' wives or daughters, and, generally speaking, fitted in nowhere He had, by the way, become very devout and often read the Bible.

When the regiment was ordered to Lithuania in early spring, the new officer proved painstaking, but absent-minded. He spoiled the formation and gave the word of command badly, calling down his Colonel's reproof and even the remark that he was no longer on board ship.

Evgueny's only reply was a silent glance out of dark-blue, sorrowful eyes. He felt neither angry nor insulted, thinking: "Revile me—beat me if you like. I have deserved worse than that."

This silence and that humble and submissive glance disarmed the Colonel, and he ended by speaking to him in a softer tone.

The battalion-commander once summed him up by saying:

"A very good man, and possessing great strength of character. But I should say he has something on his mind—a fatal duel, or the gambling away of Government funds."

"May be it's simply that he is a Freemason?" said another battalion-commander.

"Perhaps! That would explain his reading the Bible[37] and all those little French books."

"Of course he's a Freemason."

This new designation stuck to Evgueny, who got to know it but said nothing. Remembering his momentous conversation with Kozodéeff and what he had thought of him then, he smiled to himself.

Nothing mattered now. There was heavy guilt on his soul, unforgiven by God or man. War broke out, and he felt as though his own madness and weakness had helped the enemy obliquely. This thought never left him, nor did one other thought, however much he tried to banish it. It was the memory of Germaine, of her deep, liquid eyes, her low velvety

[37] Russian Freemasons were very religious.

voice. Hating her, he yet loved her as before. He did not know which feeling was uppermost, but he could not forget.

Among his simple and artless fellow officers Evgueny, with his complicated, reserved and enigmatic nature, which seemed to guard some deeply hidden secret, stood out distinctly, and his soldiers noticed this at once. They became convinced that their company-commander was a being set apart, a man under a charm, and that he would yet prove himself in war, whatever he might do wrong in time of peace.

Hardly had warlike operations begun, when a deep inner bond, a mutual tacit comprehension, arose between Evgueny and his men, who particularly admired his courage. They did not know that it was due, not to a spirited impulse, but to indifference to danger. Evgueny sought death—death on the battlefield, which would put him right with God and man.

As already stated, an attack had been awaited since dawn on the 6th of August. But the French gave no sign, and almost the whole of the Toula Regiment was asleep at about three in the afternoon, when the invitation to a dinner in honor of the newly arrived officers from St. Petersburg was received.

Evgueny's battalion-commander, Major Razsokhin, a stalwart man who was fond of a glass, and liked banquets and speeches equally well, fastened his worn, but well brushed uniform with shining buttons, shook his epaulets, and approached the Freemason, who was lying under a straw shelter with a book in his hand.

"Evgueny Nikolaevitch," he said in his deep voice importantly, "the Staff have invited us senior officers to dine with personages from St. Petersburg, which means there will be no fighting to-day. Cossacks are in front of us, and it is said that the French are falling back. . . . So all is quiet, calm and satisfactory, and we are going to celebrate. . . . But, should anything happen, remember that I have entrusted the battalion to you. Act resolutely. Stand like a rock. Meet the enemy with musket and bayonet and await my return. . . . Is that clear? . . . Have no fear, my friend, with me at your back. . . . And now, farewell, or, as our enemy says: 'au revoir.'"

The Major rode off across the stubble-field in the direction

of the manor, whilst Evgueny, having acknowledged these instructions Navy fashion,[38] lay down to continue reading his book. His battalion was not rich in officers—one sub-lieutenant in his company, two others—commanding two other companies. Owing to the illness of its officer, an old sergeant was temporarily in command of the fourth company.

As he lay under his straw shelter, there was no thought of fighting in Evgueny's mind. All around him was quiet. Corn-sheaves and piled arms cast dark-blue shadows which were beginning to lengthen. There were only four more hours of day-light left, and it was unlikely that the French would attack with night coming on.

From the manor came the sound of regimental bands and loud cheering. The festivities were evidently at their height.

Time slipped by and Evgueny lay quietly, deep in his book.

XV.

A SINGLE shot, followed by the thunder of a cannonade, brought Evgueny to his feet. From where he stood, he could see all the outskirts of Polotzk swathed in white cannon-smoke, saw Cossacks galloping away from the valley of the river Polota, and Chasseurs running out of the gardens and orchards. There was no doubt about it. The French were advancing.

Evgueny ran out of the shelter, crying: "To arms!"

The men, who had been roused by the artillery salvo, were hastily slipping on their knapsacks, buckling on their short swords and snatching their muskets. Sergeants mustered the companies. Ammunition-pouches were opened, and flints screwed tight.

An adjutant dashed up from Pristenitza, shouting as he rode that the battalions were to form into squares, meeting the enemy with battle-fire.

Ogloblin counted the companies and formed a square.

[38] In the Navy, the word for "Yes" or "All right" was "Yest" (literally "It is").

"Your Honor," said the sergeant at the head of the fourth company, "all our troops are retiring."

"You heard the order?" replied Ogloblin calmly. "Let who will, retire. We stay where we are. . . . Load!"

The air whined and groaned as the shot fell right and left over the field, dim with the dust of the retreating Russian troops. The smoke of the cannonade drifted towards Evgueny's battalion, whilst through the roar of guns came the beat of many drums.

The sergeants had piled knapsacks in the middle of the square, and on this heap stood Evgueny, sword in hand. His face was pale. He had no thought of heroic deeds and saw no heroism in his action; all he thought of was that the time to make amends had come. Now he could prove, to himself and to the world, that he was not the craven of yesterday. It was as though some inner spiritual chords were taut and vibrated within him. All the voices of his physical being were mute, and so all fear had vanished. Evgueny was calm. Not even the feeling of his mental solitude on the battlefield troubled him. Had the whole battalion taken to flight, he would have continued to stand on the pile of knapsacks, with bullets and cannon-balls flying around him. But under the spell of its officer's coolness, the battalion stood firm.

Evgueny saw the long lines of the blue French infantry advancing ever nearer. Through the smoke and dust raised by the cannon-balls, indifferent to all this crash and roar, he could clearly distinguish the gold of the drums and of the eagles on the regimental colors. Right and left, the green Bavarians advanced. The black and crimson Portuguese were on a level with his square.

Evgueny looked at the advancing foe. "Is this the end?" came the mental query, followed by the swift reply: "No matter. . . . There have been worse things. . . ."

A stormy night at sea and the *Diana* aground, battering against the rocks. That was worse. And the Turks chopping off Serbian heads, whilst he counted how many remained between death and himself. That was also worse. . . .

But worst of all was that autumnal evening, when he had

told Kouzma about his wrongdoing and Kouzma would not grasp his hand. . . . And, later on, telling his own people of his imprisonment, and, knowing what he knew and was, ignobly stealing their pity like a thief.

"No!" thought Evgueny, "the knowledge of my guilt is worse than this moment, with shot raining on us and the French advancing. . . ."

"All this is nothing!" he said aloud.

Hearing these words, the soldiers glanced at each other.

"He's under a spell, for sure," ran the whisper through the ranks. Looking at the calm figure which stood on the piled knapsacks, leaning on a slender sword, the men felt his quiet resolution steal into their hearts. After all, they could only die once.

Evgueny gave the order for direct and ricochet fire. But, this time, the word of command was properly given. He calculated the number of paces separating him from the French. Three hundred paces.

"First files, ready!"

The files made a half-turn. One, two! As with a single rattle and slap, muskets were thrust forward. Bayonets gleamed in the sun.

"Turn the toe of your right foot, you booby!" came the old sergeant Sviridoff's abusive voice.

"Present!"

The number of those paces separating him from the enemy hammered in Evgueny's brain. Two hundred and seventy. . . . Two hundred and sixty. . . .

"Fire!"

The words of command came smoothly, precisely, and well. His mind was clear of thought; his soul felt a strange lightness, as though treading on air.

White smoke enveloped the files. Muskets spoke as one. The acrid smell of gunpowder took Evgueny by the throat. He saw the advancing dark-blue mass quiver and halt, saw its foremost officer fall.

In the Russian square, the outer file stepped back as re-

quisite, the second file taking its place. Evgueny heard the low-voiced order of: "Bite on the cartridge!" in each company.

Ramrods clicked, thrusting bullets down. The battalion was doing its work faultlessly, like a properly wound, smoothly running machine.

"Ready! . . . Present! . . . Fire!"

As the word of command was obeyed, the advancing French flung themselves right and left, breaking their neighboring lines. In disorderly waves, the French infantry foamed against the Russian squares

"Grenadier company! Ricochet fire right and left! Chasseurs! Direct fire!" shouted Evgueny.

"Ready!"

The battle tumult raged, mingling in one dreadful whole the smoke and dust, the trample and crunch of thousands of feet, the beating of drums and words of command. An enemy shot fell close without bursting, and Evgueny felt an unpleasant metallic taste in his mouth.

"Clear them away!" shouted a sergeant. "Close your ranks! Why stand like stuck pigs? . . . Afraid of getting messed?"

Three soldiers covered with blood were dragged to Evgueny's very feet. Not a groan escaped any of them. One lay motionless with a stern face, the two others moved occasionally, waving their hands helplessly, like infants.

Evgueny looked at them, then bent his glance once more to where figures in dark-blue and white moved through dust and smoke, like ghosts. His word of command came loud and confident, as before:

"Fire!"

Evgueny did not know whether minutes passed, or hours. Time was not. Time passed without touching him, and he never felt it speed by. Things changed in his sight, but he himself stood unchanging on the heap of knapsacks, as he had stood when the distant lines of the French infantry had first become visible.

His square had shrunk. Its fire was more ragged. It held

dead and wounded soldiers, their knapsacks, muskets, water-cans, torn off uniforms and shakoes strewn near them on the ground. Some of the wounded men lay motionless, staring fixedly before them in strange and dreadful quiet, others moved or groaned or tied up each other's wounds with pieces of shirt. Bits of blood-stained rag seemed to be everywhere. And everywhere was blood.

"How much there is of it!" thought Evgueny, "And how unpleasant it smells."

"One ought to clear up!" he said aloud.

"It can't be done," said his company sergeant. "One can't get out of this, any more than out of a fortress."

Evgueny glanced round and saw, to his surprise, that the field seemed suddenly empty. The enemy was no longer quite close, either to his front or on his flank. There was no one to fire at, and the French artillery was silent. The distant walls of the monastery gleamed white in the rosy dusk of the cannon-smoke. Dark figures of riders galloped about, getting into line, a sure sign that a cavalry attack was preparing. The enemy infantry had retired beyond Pristenitza, and nothing could be distinguished thereabouts through the clouds of smoke and dust.

Evgueny felt as old "Bless You!" must have felt on board ship during a lull in the storm. Just as the Captain had cut away the rigging or stepped a jury-mast, doing all in his power to right the ship, so did Evgueny take advantage of a temporary pause to have the roll called in all the companies, muskets wiped, flints changed, and cartridges collected from the killed and wounded.

The storm and squall of the infantry had passed over his square, which was like a ship foundering at sea. Now he was expecting the new squall of a cavalry attack.

Suddenly, in a loud and menacing roar, came the sound of heavy musketry and artillery fire from the rear, beyond Pristenitza. The distant woods were swathed in smoke.

Quiet fell again. The sun was setting over Polotzk, the sky was aflame in the west and in its red glow, squadrons of

cavalry advancing to attack showed like black shadows, distant but growing larger as they approached.

Smoke rose all about Evgueny's square like mist over a marsh. Glancing round, he saw in this mist the bowed, clumsy figure of a Bavarian infantryman running in swift leaps from the direction of Pristenitza. He was alone, and the sight of his solitary figure seemed to accentuate the silence of the empty battlefield. Other fleeing figures showed here and there and the entire field was suddenly covered with men. Portuguese, Bavarians, Frenchmen, were running in crowds or little groups, all avoiding the battalion square. None of the Russians fired after them, but all gazed with a kind of glad wonder.

"See there, your Honor!" said a sergeant. "Seems as though our side had won. . . . Look how they run! Skipping like hares."

Mounted officers appeared, trotting among the fugitives. Black three-cornered hats ornamented with white or colored plumes, came into view. A regimental paymaster passed close enough, it seemed, to be touched by an outstretched hand. He rode a little black horse and wore a blue frock-coat and round black hat. His fat body bumped awkwardly up and down in his saddle. His clean-shaven face looked angry and sullen.

This fat man was the last to go by. The battlefield stood empty, strewn, as far as the eye could reach, with knapsacks, water-cans, muskets and cloaks. The dead and wounded were numerous round the square.

A drummer-boy ran suddenly by, howling. On his back banged a heavy, glittering drum; the leather apron swung between his legs. The lad was obviously crazy with fear.

"Tally ho!"

"Halloo!" the soldiers in the square sent hunting cries after him. One man flung a stone.

A hundred paces behind the drummer-boy, through a sunlit haze of smoke, appeared the many colored glittering lines of squadrons of Russian cavalry. Evgueny first noticed the Hussars of the Guards. Their light-bay horses were trying to break into a gallop, their braided dolmans glittered with gold and yellow, and their red pelisses waved like wings behind

their shoulders. Squadrons of Horse-Guards and Cuirassiers in black uniforms came after them, their cuirasses shining in the sunset glow, their black helmets with horsehair chin-straps hiding their faces, while three squadrons of Grodno Hussars rapidly formed up on the other flank of the square.

The cavalry rode in stern silence. Not a shot came from anywhere. Only the ground hummed under the impact of countless hooves. Unsheathed sabres and broad-swords, resting on the shoulders of the riders, glinted with a cold, steely light, and pennons fluttered on lances.

As though of set purpose, the Russian squadrons did not gain on the fleeing infantry, but kept at an equal distance from it all the while.

The eyes of Evgueny and his men were glued to this wave of horsemen, now smoothly advancing at a gallop.

Evgueny saw a fat colonel of Horse-Guards ride past at a furious pace, epaulets a-quiver, managing with difficulty a tall black thorough-bred, which rolled nervous eyes at the corpses on its way. A gray-haired trumpeter rode after him, his be-ribboned trumpet resting on his hip. The faces of both riders were pale, their eyes, widened with apprehension, showed dark beneath the rim of their helmets, like the empty eye-sockets of a skull.

As the colonel pelted by, shouting a hoarse word of command which echoed over the battlefield, a clear, sweet trumpet-call, unfamiliar to Russian ears, floated towards Evgueny on the cool, transparent evening air. He turned in the direction of this sound.

The squadrons he had glimpsed near the ravines of the river Polota—it was now plain they were eight in number—were galloping, mounted on dark horses, in a long front of dark-green jackets with crimson and yellow, to meet the Russian cavalry. The distance between them narrowed rapidly to not more than three hundred paces.

Evgueny saw lances dip to the level of the horses' eyes, saw their pennons flutter before the long row of horses' heads which surged forward in a mad gallop. Along the hindmost ranks, broad-swords rose aloft like a flame of steel. A thun-

derous "Hurrah!" rolled over the battlefield, as the roar of an avalanche rolls in the hills.

It seemed to Evgueny that, as squadron met squadron, each was dashed into the air. A deafening crash became merged in groans and shouts. Evgueny shut his eyes. . . .

When he opened them, he saw that on the spot where the opposing cavalry had met, lay a long, straight row of dead men and beasts. All over the field Russian horsemen were driving off the French Chasseurs-à-cheval, who were spurring towards the orchards now almost invisible in the dark.

"Victory! Victory!" sang Evgueny's soul. As though in reply, the gay and gallant sounds of an infantry march fell on his ear. They were instantly deadened by the throb of drums beating the attack.

Evgueny caught sight of General Hamen riding across the field, followed by his adjutant, trumpeter, and band. Beyond them, in open order and with colors flying, came the Navaginsky Regiment, the Esthonians, the 11th Chasseurs, and, nearest to his square, his own Toula Regiment.

In the rear, marching in whirls of dust, he saw the serried ranks of the second line.

Evgueny dressed his battalion, gave the word of command, and, to the strains of martial music, walking on air, he brought his men up to their regiment, and took his stand in the appointed place.

XVI.

Involved in the general flight of infantry before the Russian Guards cavalry—for which a Portuguese battalion had set the example—General St. Cyr could not keep up with it on his tired mount. Some Horse-Guards were gaining on him, and, feeling sure that escape was impossible, he flung himself into a ditch and shammed dead. The Horse-Guards thundered past,

paying no heed to the stout man, clad in blue, faded civilian garb, who lay in the ditch.

During the skirmish between the Russian cavalry with the French Cuirassiers and Chasseurs-à-cheval, some of General Castex's troops approached the spot where St. Cyr lay. He sprang out of the ditch, mounted the horse they gave him, and galloped off to re-form the Bavarian infantry in the gardens near the monastery.

Evgueny walked at the head of his battalion, the joy of victory still singing in his heart. His step was light and he felt no fatigue. Behind him came his men with a firm, loud tread. The inspiriting strains of a march drifted over to them from a regiment near by. Drums were beating the attack. All over the battlefield, as far as the eye could reach, lay dead or wounded, together with bodies of horses, caps, and metal helmets. It was growing dark. In the foreground, gardens and orchards were blending into one dense and gloomy whole. Only the monastery walls still formed a light patch beyond them.

Two trumpets near Pristenitza sounded a long-drawn, throbbing call which seemed to respond to the melancholy of the greenish-blue evening sky and the chill creeping up from the river. Close upon this came the loud trampling of horses' feet, as riders disappeared beyond the hillocks.

General Hamen's infantry was approaching the outskirts of Polotzk. Evgueny saw figures of horsemen, looming enormous in the twilight, suddenly become silhouetted against the background of orchards.

Somebody cried out: "Can they be our men?"

The band of the Navaguinsky Regiment stopped playing. The throb of the drums ceased as well. There rose a single, despairing cry:

"Cavalry! . . . Cavalry! . . . Cavalry!"

Through the dark came a word of command:

"Battalions—halt!"

The crunch of many feet stopped. Only the heavy breathing of the men became audible.

"Prepare to receive cavalry!"

Evgueny's battalion began to alter its formation. He did not even have time to give the word of command.

Standing on the right flank of his company, he looked in front of him with astonishment.

Though hardly visible in the growing dusk, there was something strangely, unaccountably familiar in those bucket-shaped dark shakoes, with their green and fluffy pompons. The fire of his grenadier-company mounted raggedly towards the night sky. A yellow flame belched into the faces of the advancing horsemen. It seemed to Evgueny that they stopped short. Suddenly, as in a nightmare, the vision of an enormous horse swam before his eyes, a horse from whose back a tall man was pitching right onto him. He wore a high cap and an embroidered jacket, and his face showed white even in the dark. It seemed strange and foolish that he should not be able to leave the saddle, but leant sideways, his hands thrust towards Evgueny. He would clutch him in the twinkling of an eye. . . . And all around, likewise, was nightmare and delirium. Men were running heavily at his back. A drum fell noisily, hitting the ground with a hollow sound.

This sound seemed to extinguish the sky, which darkened instantly and appeared to tumble and vanish. Everything spun giddily before Evgueny's eyes and he lost consciousness.

Evgueny did not know how long he remained unconscious. He first became aware of low, delicate sounds which seemed to sing, coming from afar, and somehow blended in strange harmony with the lilac, deep blue, green and red lightning flashes that danced before his eyes. At times these sounds became almost hushed, and the bright flashes seemed to follow suit by growing paler, and, moving slowly across his field of vision, turned into small, transparent rays of light. Then the sounds swelled again and became louder, and the color of the rays increased as though in obedience to the music.

With the louder music full consciousness returned. Pain made itself felt in his chest and numbness in his left arm. With the pain came mental pictures of a battlefield in the dusk, the

roll of drums and the beat of horses' hoofs. But this was only for a moment, then the sweet, low melody smote his ear once more. The pain receded and distant recollections rose in his mind. Evgueny began to imagine himself in a theatre. He heard the murmur of a fashionable throng, breathed the exciting odor of scent, wax candles, and the fresh paint of theatrical scenery.

Not daring to open his eyes, he gave himself up to this queer waking dream. But his wits were coming back, and it was the strangest thing to hear these sweet distant sounds of a violin playing somewhere far away, whilst at the same time feeling that he lay on the cold ground, the damp night air playing over his face.

Fearing to break the charm, Evgueny cautiously opened his eyes. The sight on which they rested might, in truth, have been a stage scene. A huge, round moon, looking absolutely artificial, hung motionless in an unnaturally deep blue sky, powdered with little stars. In the moonlight, the high walls of a monastery, the tower of a Catholic church, glistened milkily. At their very feet drowsed a shady garden, all silvery in the rays of the moon, its trees looking cold, motionless, as though painted on, and casting a heavy shadow.

All the monastery windows were dark save one whence a soft yellow light shone from behind a drawn curtain. From this window floated the music of a violin.

The harmonious sounds did not cease, nor did the magic of the night.

All this was so extraordinary, so unlike all that had gone before, that Evgueny propped himself on his uninjured arm and sat up.

Opposite him, not more than two paces off, a man wearing an unfastened military jacket sat on the ground. He was bareheaded. His face, brightly lit up by the moon, was transparently pale and looked like the face of a corpse. Dark, arched eyebrows and a small moustache seemed glued on this motionless waxen mask. Only the glance of the dark eyes, fixed on Evgueny, showed that the man was still alive.

For some moments Evgueny stared unwinkingly. At last

it dawned on him that here was an enemy, and fear seized him. Evgueny made a movement to rise and flee, but a burning pain forced him to remain where he was. Again he gazed at the dreadful white mask. . . . Who was it? He looked more closely, and a shiver ran down his spine.

Yes—it was an enemy. More than that—it was André Réville.

A thousand memories of his former infamy thronged into Evgueny's mind, shutting out all thoughts of the present.

Yes, just as they did now, those black, slightly protuberant eyes used to look at him across a card-table. But then they had shone with a mocking, contemptuous light. He remembered the sound of chalk crumbling against green cloth, and the long row of figures that ran along it. Germaine had sat, perched on a chest of drawers behind him, watching their play, her feet resting on a footstool, her warm knees touching his ribs. Sometimes she had laid her scented palm over his eyes and said: "Now pick up a card without looking. I'll bring you luck. . . ." He had taken a card, and had generally lost.

For a moment Evgueny thought he saw a vision, imagined that this well-known face had only appeared to remind him, before death, of the indelible shame of his fall. Eyes wide with terror, he gazed long into those dark, glittering eyes, until, with the full return of consciousness, he knew that no apparition, but a thing of flesh and blood, confronted him. He tried to move the fingers of his injured hand—and they moved; he flexed his arm at the elbow—and it bent. He drew a deep breath, and the pain in his chest seemed easier. A purely animal joy in being alive seized Evgueny. Now he must run away—run quickly, so as not to see this white face any more.

Evgueny tucked his legs under him, sitting in a manner that would make an attempt at rising possible.

"Tiens, tiens, tiens . . ."[89] said the Frenchman hoarsely. "So you're alive after all? I thought you were killed, but you were only unconscious. You were lucky. . . . If only I could faint, so as not to feel this accursed bullet in my stomach for a moment."

[89] "Well, well, well."

Evgueny kept silence, thinking: "Does he know me? He is sure to, if I speak."

The sounds of the violin continued to float from the monastery window. Groans of wounded men, lying on the adjacent battlefield, were becoming more clearly audible. Again it seemed to Evgueny that he was delirious.

"Can you understand what I say? All your officers speak French. . . . I knew a Russian sailor well—a nice lad. . . . He spoke French like a Parisian. . . . Can't you understand me at all?"

Evgueny ached to know what had become of Germaine, but he restrained himself and did not speak. The music of the violin stopped, and resumed, playing an ancient church melody. It sounded as though angels hovered, singing, low over the bloodstained battlefield.

A fit of shivering seized the Frenchman. His teeth chattered, and his pale face grew paler still.

"Germaine . . . Germaine!" he groaned aloud.

Evgueny raised himself a little.

"It is my sister I'm thinking about. . . . Such a nice girl—and such a sad thing happened to her."

Evgueny set his teeth, so as not to put the question that clamored for utterance.

"Such a sad thing, poor girl!" repeated the Frenchman. The need for confession, for open speech, which so often comes to badly wounded or dying men, was upon him. "She fell in love with that Russian sailor—such madness! Oh! I forgot. . . . You can't understand what I say, of course!"

The Frenchman was silent. He fell backwards and lay motionless, breathing hard and unevenly.

The sound of the violin floated once more from above.

"That's St. Cyr playing . . ." muttered the Frenchman. "St. Cyr, our Commander-in-Chief. . . . Sends us to death by day, and plays the fiddle by night, instead of giving orders for the wounded to be gathered in. . . . They are all the same . . . only think of themselves. . . ."

He was now talking to himself, paying no heed to Evgueny. It was obvious that he had begun to rave.

"Napoleon . . . thinks of himself . . . St. Cyr of himself. . . . And Marbot also. . . . No. . . . Marbot might perhaps think of the regiment. And I only of myself, as well. . . . Ah! I want to live. . . ."

His voice died away, then he groaned despairingly:

"I don't want to die! All emptiness after. . . ."

He lay motionless for a long time. Then, with a sudden movement, he sat up and clutched his head with both hands.

"I don't want to. . . . I don't want to. . . . I am afraid. . . . Nothing but emptiness there. . . ."

"God is there," said Evgueny in a low voice.

"Who is that speaking?" said the Frenchman hoarsely. He seemed to have forgotten Evgueny's presence. "What are you saying?"

"I said that God was there," repeated Evgueny. "And there is everlasting life."

"Tiens. . . . Everlasting life—life everlasting? who decreed that?"

"God did."

"And why God?" André asked, as a child might have done. He turned to face Evgueny. In his present state, he did not find it at all strange that the Russian officer should suddenly begin talking French.

"God was, is, and will be. . . . There never was a time when God was not. God is everywhere, and He is listening to us now. God created the world, and sent His son to save us, Who was betrayed and crucified. He died and was buried, and on the third day He rose from the dead in sign of our own resurrection."

"I've heard that, when I was a child. . . . But it's all fairy-tales," said the wounded man. "Aren't you afraid of death?"

"No! I am only afraid of the fearful Judgement Seat of Christ, and of the wages of sin in the next world."

"In the next world," repeated André slowly, as though trying to understand the meaning of these words. He lay down again on his back, and silence fell.

Muddled thoughts spun in his heavy head, which burned with fever. He stared at the enormous moon hanging above him in the deep blue sky, and it seemed to him that the moon wore a mocking, crafty smile. Long, transparent clouds sailed over her face, but to the wounded man it was as though they stood still, whilst the moon sailed gently across the sky. Disconnected scraps of thought drifted through his brain, mingling queerly with what he had heard in his childhood.

"God created everything—the sun, the moon and the stars. If God exists, then miracles can happen. . . . Here's a Russian suddenly speaking French. . . . Isn't that a miracle? If miracles exist, then so can salvation . . . life everlasting. . . ."

"I don't want life everlasting. . . . Just to live a little longer. . . . To see Paris again. . . . Paris!" whispered André.

He seemed to be burning up inside. His mouth and throat were parched. Thirst tormented him.

"A drink!" he said hoarsely. "Water!"

He could hear the Russian officer move and feel about on the ground.

"I am sorry, but I haven't any water," said Evgueny.

"Why are you sorry? I'm your enemy," groaned the Frenchman.

"Christ taught us not to have any enemies," said Evgueny gently.

"Then give me a drink."

"How can I? I am badly wounded myself."

"For Christ's sake. . . . Do you hear? For Christ's sake give me water. . . ."

Evgueny propped his sound hand on the ground, then rose to his feet. His legs felt like lead, but he could stand. He picked up André's heavy shako and made his way slowly to the river.

Fires burned on the opposite bank and were reflected in the water. Round them human shadows flickered. The violin in the monastery went on playing the ancient church melody; its strains floated sweetly through the night, singing of high and eternal things:

"Sancta Maria, madre di Dio, prega per noi, peccatori. . . . Adesso e nel ora della nostra morte. . . ." [40]

Evgueny brought the shako back, filled to the brim with cold, fresh water. André drank eagerly, his teeth clicking against the metal edge. Having drunk his fill, he caught Evgueny by the hand and rose painfully to his feet.

"Take me with you," he said. "Take me to your priests. I want to learn about your God . . . your love! I want not to be afraid of death."

He clutched Evgueny convulsively round the neck.

They set off together up the slope, in the direction from where the groans of the wounded men were audible. Every two steps Evgueny halted, panting.

"I might have got there by myself, but never with him," came into his head. But he drove the thought away. "This is my temptation. If I leave him to die here, God will never forgive me."

"In Christ's name," muttered André at his ear, hanging onto his neck.

Evgueny no longer heard the violin. There was a buzzing in his ears, and the ground heaved under his feet. He stumbled painfully along, summoning all his strength, halted to gather breath, and went on again. The moon had set, and the slope they mounted was dark and endlessly long.

André's weight felt ever heavier. He dragged himself along sideways, moving his legs in strange, wooden jerks.

The slope came abruptly to an end, and Evgueny saw before him a dark-blue fog, drifting far into the distance. He took a few more steps, still supporting André, then something dark loomed up out of the fog before him. There was no time to discover what it was, for André gave a feeble moan and suddenly pitched forward against Evgueny, dragging him to the ground in his fall.

Evgueny fell down. The embroidery on the Frenchman's collar felt rough and cold against his face. As through a layer

[40] "Mary, Mother of God, pray for us poor sinners! Now, and at the hour of our death."

of wadding, he confusedly heard a hail. It came from no great distance.

"Halt! Who goes there?"

He tried to reply and could not. Only a moan escaped his lips.

He heard horse's hoofs trampling quite close to his head. The fear that they might crush his skull flooded his consciousness and he fainted.

The trooper of the Grodno Hussars who had challenged Evgueny dug his heels into the flanks of his sleepy horse. It moved forward, only to start aside in affright. Under a bush, where nothing had been that evening, two bodies lay in a heap. A French officer was uppermost, beneath him lay a Russian lieutenant, one epaulette almost torn off his black infantry uniform.

The Hussar sprang off his mount and bent over them. The Frenchman was dead, but the Russian was still breathing.

Stretchers were sent for on the Hussar's report, and Evgueny was taken to the dressing-station at the "Vollwark" Ropno. They laid the French officer at the end of a long row of Russian dead, in a general grave not yet filled in.

The sun rose flaming above the wood beyond Polotzk, and the distant horizon shook off the morning mists, disclosing wide spaces. But at a lower level, near the monastery, the Dvina was still wrapped in a thick white fog.

A priest in black vestments with a silver cross hanging on his breast, and wearing a dark velvet cap, walked along the row of bodies lying on the red sand of their shallow grave, and swung his censer. The general burial service was over and he was now giving the dead a final blessing and absolution of their sins. Hospital orderlies, already holding their spades, stood on the freshly turned earth bordering the grave.

The priest hesitated on seeing the French captain who lay last of the row. The dead man's white face, with its black moustache and finely arched eyebrows, was calm and beautiful with the majestic beauty of death.

The priest stood in indecision, not knowing what to do and wondering how this dead man of an alien faith had come

to lie, over-night, among these Russian soldiers. But his indecision did not last long.

He looked at the sun playing in delicate rosy reflexes on the silver censer, then he swung the censer over the beautiful dead face, and spoke:

"God forgive thee, my son, all the sins which thou hast committed with or without intent. . . . May He receive thy soul, and appoint for it a place in the abode of peace, where sickness, heaviness, and sighing are not."

A bluish trickle of incense wavered about the pale face, now stamped with an exceeding calm. The priest gave a sigh and swung the censer once more.

"Although of an alien faith and our enemy, may the Lord be with thee!"

When the first rays of the sun fell golden on his window-curtains, St. Cyr blew out the candles burning on the music-stand, carefully wiped his violin and bow, and laid them in their case.

He approached the high bedstead taken out of the prior's room, took off his worn and crumpled blue coat, and hung it over the back of a chair.

When the down pillow had touched his face, it became covered with a thousand tiny wrinkles. He remembered Oudinot, and how the latter had wanted to profit by his advice in order to gain a victory.

"It wasn't as easy as all that, mon cher," thought St. Cyr. His eyes closed, and for an instant he seemed to lie in that ditch where he had feigned death, whilst Russian troopers thundered by. He opened his eyes once more. The rosy, equal morning light lit up his old coat hanging over the back of the chair. St. Cyr smiled at it affectionately, and then winked at it:

"But who, I'd like to know, was the victor after all? Wittgenstein or I?"

He let the wrinkles on his face smooth out, sighed, stretched himself luxuriously, and went to sleep.

XVII.

THE news that Evgueny had been wounded in the chest and in the shoulder at the battle near Polotzk and had been sent to the St. Petersburg Military Hospital, reached Moscow on the 20th of August and found his mother at the very height of her waverings and indecisions. The enemy was approaching Moscow, but nobody believed that it would surrender. The streets were crowded, trade was brisk, one play followed another at the theatres, and even the French company went on acting. It could not be denied, however, that the rich denizens of Moscow were gradually leaving. Trains of carts and carriages streamed day and night in a north-easterly direction, towards Rybinsk, Vologda, or Nijni-Novgorod, where people thought they would be safe.

Kozodéeff, who had left for Vologda long before, wrote to Dournoff and to Maria Alexéevna from there, trying to persuade them to follow his example.

Dournoff wavered, however, not wishing to leave his big house in Moscow. He was loth to abandon the French furniture, the pictures, the painted ceilings, and all the luxury to which he was accustomed.

Gossip-mongers came to him every day, with news that the smoke of camp-fires could already be seen at night-time from the Poklonny Hill, that somebody had already heard the sound of cannon-shot, and so on. And all the while, by night and by day, the ever increasing stream of wagons left Moscow with government or private property. Departure could assuredly no longer be delayed.

The news about Evgueny caused Dournoff and Maria Alexéevna to come to a simpler and more practical decision than the one suggested by Kozodéeff. They decided to leave Moscow for St. Petersburg in two *dormeuses,*[41] taking their

[41] Closed travelling-coaches of the time. There were four seats inside, and sometimes two more seats, with a hood, were attached behind. A team of four and sometimes six horses were harnessed to them.

time to give their horses a rest and feed them on the way. The Emperor and the Court were there, and so was the wounded Evgueny. And in St. Petersburg, too, Dournoff had a town-house, as well as a country-house at Peterhof. Living there would bring no change in the usual "dolce far niente" round of gentlefolk's existence, the chatter, the orders given to cooks and servants. The very fact of her son having been wounded in Wittgenstein's army appeared as the finger of Providence, as a mysterious sign to indicate that, if flight was necessary, it must be directed to St. Petersburg. That her son's blood should have been spilt in the defence of the northern capital, was the most conclusive evidence that St. Petersburg could not be taken.

No member of Dournoff's household slept that night before their exodus, for things left behind had to be put away, and things being taken had to be packed. All night long Nadenka, who had at last retired to her room for a short rest before the journey, heard doors being banged, trunks and bundles being carried out to the yard, and dogs barking. At an early hour she appeared on the porch, before which the coaches were already standing. She wore a loose *gris-de-perle* [42] traveling cloak which hid her changed figure, and a bonnet with wide ribbons. In her reticule were her English smelling-salts, her pocket-handkerchief, and special peppermint drops for travelling, supposed to be infallible against faintness. Morning freshness had given her a rosy color and she looked very pretty.

The dew had made the grass-plots look like silver. The sun was just climbing out over the roofs. All the church bells of Moscow were calling to early morning-service. The air was clear, soft and translucent. One did not feel inclined to think or be afraid. Even the coming journey seemed to be a pleasant jaunt, rather than a necessary evil, a flight before the enemy. Kouzma's favorite dog, Marat, ran up to Nadenka, wagging his tail. He too felt excited and happy at the sight of all this travelling bustle.

Dournoff's old coachman, Nikanor, looked very important on the box of one of the coaches. The two grooms, Andrei and Gerassim, stood in front of the team of four well-fed,

[42] Pearl grey.

strong Tambov [43] horses, holding them by the bridle. Servants were carrying Dournoff's bundles, baskets, cushions and travelling-rugs into the other coach, which had a team of four piebald Tartar horses.

Maria Alexéevna was settled comfortably in the first of the coaches. Nadenka was swathed in shawls and tucked up. Opposite her, with Marat on the same seat beside her, sat the housemaid Tanka, who so filled the coach with the odor of print frock, perspiration, and onion, that Nadenka immediately had recourse to her smelling-salts.

Dournoff came up to the coach-window.

"Well, are you quite comfortable? Nikanor, mind you drive carefully if there are big stones on the road. The young Madam must not be jostled."

Nadenka said nothing, blushing at all this care of her.

A Cossack ran up with a basket full of apples and pears. Dournoff handed it to Maria Alexéevna through the window.

"Stepan Fedorovitch," said Nadenka. "Please leave that window open."

"Do be careful, Nadenka. The morning air is fresh. You might easily catch cold," said Maria Alexéevna.

"No! No! I prefer it to be open."

"Is Nurse Matvéevna settled in the other coach?"

"Yes, yes! All is ready."

"Well, we can start, Nikanor."

All made the sign of the cross. Nikanor took off his hat, decorated with peacock's feathers,[44] and also crossed himself repeatedly, looking in the direction of the church cupolas which sparkled in the sun above the roofs of the houses.

"Let go," he said to the grooms, who stepped back. The horses started at a trot and the heavy "dormeuses" rolled along the stone-paved road with a clatter of wheels and window-panes.

When they had passed the town gates, they saw that the

[43] The studs of the government of Tambov were the best for carriage horses.

[44] Russian driver's headgear.

road was densely covered with a stream of carts and carriages, in which their coaches became swiftly merged.

Their first halt was at a wayside-inn to which Dournoff's cooks had been sent, overnight, to prepare a meal. Whilst waiting in the clean parlor of the inn, Nadenka walked up and down the room, looking at the poor woodcuts, and at the inscriptions scribbled on its walls by travellers. As though of set purpose, every word on which her eye fell spoke of sadness.

On a wooden beam of the wall somebody had cut in French with a pocket-knife:

"Le mot adieu, ce mot terrible." [45]

The word *adieu* had been cut in large, deep characters. Lower down, a feminine hand had written in pencil, in flowing and pretty handwriting:

"Distinguez-vous et ne m'oubliez pas." [46]

With an ache at her heart and all ready to burst into tears, Nadenka absent-mindedly opened the visitors' book at its last page. Here was evidence of sadness too, set down in what was probably a young girl's uncertain handwriting:

"Je vous salue, o lieux charmants, quittés avec tant de tristesse. . . ." [47]

Nadenka thought she could almost see a pair of tender, tear-stained eyes, and a small handkerchief wet with tears. Below these words, boldly written in ink, came a Russian quatrain:

"Barclay de Tolley
"Can go right away.
"Koutouzoff bet your money,
"Will beat old Boney. . . ."

Nadenka's heart seemed to contract. This verse reminded her somehow of Kouzma. It was quite in his style. Ah! where was Kouzma now?

[45] "That dreadful word 'good-bye.'"
[46] "Gather glory, and don't forget me."
[47] "Good-bye, sweet spot. Sorrowfully I leave you."

Something cold touched her palm, causing her to start. It was Marat, poking his cold nose into her hand.

"Marat! Dear Marat!" Nadenka stroked the shaggy head tenderly. "You alone understand how sad I am."

XVIII.

THE news brought by military couriers in secret dispatches to St. Petersburg, travelled faster than did Dournoff and Nadenka with her mother, who made long halts on the way to rest and bait their horses. By the time of their arrival in the capital, it was full of the most sinister rumors. The terrible details of the battle of Borodino had just reached it, and soon after came the news that Moscow had fallen.

On church railings, in the streets and squares, the proclamation of the Emperor was pasted up. Nadenka stood reading it. Her head was void of thought. She only felt an overwhelming pain and pity for the Emperor.

Nadenka had just stepped out of the "dormeuse." The servants were carrying their luggage into the house, and Nurse Matvéevna was calling to her to go in and rest. Her brother Evgueny was expected from the hospital. They had sent a carriage to fetch him immediately on their arrival. Nadenka's feet were numb and her legs stiff from sitting so long in the carriage, but she waved Nurse Matvéevna away and remained standing at the gate, where the freshly printed sheets were pasted up, and read the fat, impassive letters:

". . . The enemy entered Moscow on the 3rd of September. But let not the great Russian people give way to despondency. On the contrary, let everyone swear to be full of courage and unswerving hope that the evil and harm which the enemy is bringing upon us, will recoil on his own head. The enemy has not occupied Moscow because he has conquered it, or weakened our forces. The Commander-in-Chief, after having taken counsel with the foremost generals, has deemed it advisable to bow

for a time to necessity, so as better to turn the enemy's short triumph into his ruin. However painful it is to every Russian heart to think that the enemy is within the walls of our ancient capital, we must remember that it is denuded of all its treasures and all its inhabitants. The proud conqueror hoped, on entering it, to become master of the whole Russian Empire, and to dictate his terms of peace. But his hopes will not be fulfilled, and not only will he not find in that capital the means of ruling over Russia, but he will not even find any means of subsistence there. The forces we have gathered around Moscow, and which augment with every hour, will not cease to bar his way and to destroy all the detachments which he sends out for supplies, so long as he does not see that his hope of striking a decisive blow by the taking of Moscow was vain, and that he must fight his way back. His position is as follows: he entered our country with an army of three hundred thousand men, the main body of which consisted of men of different nationalities, who serve him, not out of zeal, not for the defence of their country, but out of shameful fear and weakness. Half of this mixed army has been destroyed, partly by our valorous troops, and partly owing to desertion, sickness, and famine. With the rest of it he has come to Moscow. Doubtless, this bold, or, we should rather say, insolent ambition to penetrate into the very heart of Russia and even into her ancient capital, satisfies his pride and gives him cause for vainglory. But the end is not yet. He has not entered a country where one bold step strikes everybody with terror and makes troops and people kneel before him. Russia is not accustomed to humble herself before a conqueror, to bear servitude, to renounce her faith, her laws, her freedom and her courage. She will defend them to the last drop of her blood. The universal willingness to form a general militia against the foe, bears witness to the strength and firmness of our country, defended as it is by the brave spirit of its loyal sons. And so, let no one give way to despondency. Is it the time to do so, moreover, when all the forces of our country breathe of courage and steadfastness? When the enemy, with the rest of his ever decreasing troops, far from his own country, amidst a numerous alien population, finds himself surrounded by our armies, one of

which confronts him, whilst the other three are endeavoring to bar his way back and to prevent new forces from approaching him? When Spain has not only overthrown his thraldom, but threatens him with an invasion of his own land? When the greater part of Europe, exhausted and plundered by him and serving him against her will, only waits for an opportunity to escape from his oppressive and insupportable thrall? When his own country sees no end to the bloodshed which serves his ambition? In the present calamitous state of the whole human race, will not that nation gather glory, which, after having borne the inevitable horrors and ruin accompanying war, will not only achieve solid and unalterable peace for itself, but will give it to other countries, even to those who are at war with it against their will? For a Christian nation should repay good for evil.

"Almighty God! mercifully regard the Russian Church kneeling before Thee! Grant courage, firmness of spirit and patience to Thy people, who fight for truth. Let them triumph with their aid over the foe. Let them overcome him and, by saving themselves, save the liberty and independence of kingdoms and kings. . . ."

Nadenka was all a-shiver inside as she read the black lines of the proclamation. People were gathering around to read it.

"Moscow is burning, they say. Our own people have set fire to it," voices said in the crowd.

Maria Alexéevna had already twice called Nadenka from the porch of Dournoff's house, but Nadenka paid no heed to her.

"Moscow is taken!" This news had fallen upon her heart like a thunderbolt, and she tried to imagine the enemy in the streets and houses of the ancient capital. But her imagination refused to take it in. Was it possible that strange, rough people were now walking about Dournoff's house, looking at the painted ceiling in her bedroom, where Cupids were flying in the clouds and blowing their trumpets? No, it was impossible. Or, may be, the house itself was already burnt down and lay in ruins? No, this was also incredible. The lines of the proclamation danced before her eyes, and thoughts about Moscow mingled with thoughts about Kouzma.

"Even he has not been able to defend Moscow. . . . Old

Kozodéeff was right, then, when he spoke of his gloomy forebodings. They seem to be coming true. He ought to know. . . . He is a Freemason. . . ."

"Nadenka! Nadenka! Why don't you come?" once more cried Maria Alexéevna. Marat, who was jumping round Nadenka, was the first to obey her mother's call, and ran up to her. Nadenka followed him at last, walking heavily over the stones of the pavement. Her large eyes were full of tears.

"Maman," she said, going up the steps of the porch, "Moscow is taken by the French."

"What? It is impossible, Nadenka!"

"A proclamation of the Emperor is pasted up everywhere. . . . Moscow is taken."

Nadenka went to the room which had been prepared for her, and lay down on the sofa. "Moscow is taken." All that concerned her privately, her brother's wound, even the uncertainty about Kouzma, seemed to become of secondary importance before this thought which somehow wouldn't fit into her mind.

The housemaid brought in a wicker basket containing her dresses, and a leather valise. Nadenka opened the latter, took out her diary, sat down at a small table, dipped her blue quill-pen into the ink, and began to write in French, in her large, slanting handwriting:

"I have just read the news of the occupation of Moscow by Napoleon. I was awestruck by it and tried to imagine the enemy in the streets and houses of our ancient capital People say that Moscow is burning. All the happy past is buried beneath its smoking ruins. I do not know whether we should weep over our past, or over what awaits us in future? Should we bemoan our losses and recollections or our hopes, which are crushed, destroyed and as though cast into an abyss?"

XIX.

Soon after Dournoff's and the Ogloblins' arrival, a few people were spending the evening at Dournoff's house. Everybody

related what they knew. Their Petersburg friends were eager to question them about Moscow and those who had remained there. In a corner near the trellis of artificial vine, in a comfortable armchair, propped up by cushions, sat Evgueny with his arm in a black sling. His wounds were healing, and the hospital doctor had willingly given him into his mother's and sister's care. Nadenka had settled down in a small, low armchair at his feet, while Annette Bolkonsky, Barbe Poustchin and Sophie Meledinsky sat on a sofa. None of them had fulfilled her vow. Annette had not donned a helmet, Sophie had not devoted herself to tending the wounded, and Barbe had not gone wandering from one shrine to another. They had long ago returned to St. Petersburg, and lived there in the excitement of news about the war, questioning the wounded and the officers arriving from the front.

Old Antonsky stood by the clavichord, listening to Fofo who was softly playing. Maria Alexéevna sat in an armchair, wrapped in a shawl. Two five-branched candelabras burned on the table, where lay fresh copies of the *St. Petersburg News*. Dournoff was looking through them.

"Count Koutaissoff has been killed," he said.

"Koutaissoff!" exclaimed Annette. "That young officer of the Guards Artillery? How divinely he danced!"

"I was told that he was as refined and elegant on the battlefield as he was in a drawing-room, always went out to fight in a new uniform and white gloves," said Fofo.

"He was killed and his body was not found. They only found his horse with a blood-stained saddle," said Dournoff.

"Tagantzeff also has been killed," bleated Antonsky in his sheep-like voice. "You remember how beautifully he sang? Valuyeff, Prince Grouzinsky also are no more."

"Just think of it. . . . They all danced at out balls," said Maria Alexéevna with a sigh.

"Prince Bagration has been wounded by a bullet in the leg," Dournoff continued reading from the *St. Petersburg News*. "He led his troops personally to an attack near the village of Semenovskoyé. He himself, his Chief of Staff, Count de St.

Priest, and many other generals were wounded. Lieutenant-General Konovnitzin has taken over the command of his troops."

"This is old news," bleated Antonsky from his place near the clavichord. "I have heard to-day that Prince Bagration died on his estate of Sim. Prince Boris Andréevitch Galitzin told me to-day with what heroism—a heroism inherent to him—Bagration bore the amputation of his leg. But he was past help. He died . . . and his last words were: 'God save Russia!'"

Nadenka looked with terror at Antonsky and Dournoff, who was deep in his paper. They spoke of nothing but death. And she expected every moment to hear from them that Kouzma had been wounded or killed.

"Yes, our casualties are great," said Dournoff. "The *News* reckons them at fifty thousand. Fifteen thousand dead alone, and over thirty thousand wounded."

"I heard to-day," said Fofo, "that in one of Napoleon's bulletins which we intercepted, he writes of the firmness and steadfastness of the Russian troops:

"Les Russes ne pouvaient pas avancer, ne voulaient pas reculer, et mouraient sur place." [48]

"All this is very flattering, but Moscow is nevertheless occupied by the enemy," said Dournoff.

"Did you hear what Napoleon said to Touchkoff, who was taken prisoner at Loubino near Smolensk?" said Antonsky.

"No. . . . But how do you know about it?" asked Dournoff.

"Touchkoff wrote to inform his chiefs of his having been taken prisoner of war, and sent the letter by a reliable peasant to our General Headquarters. It appears that Napoleon was already thinking at that time of taking Moscow. He said to Touchkoff: 'Write to your Emperor, Alexander, that I desire nothing better than to make peace. But if, before that, I should be obliged to enter Moscow, nothing will help, whatever measures I may take to save it from ruin. A capital occupied by the enemy is like a woman who has lost her honor. Whatever you give her after that, you cannot give her back her honor. I know you say that Moscow is not Russia. They said the same in

[48] "The Russians could not advance, they did not wish to retreat, and died on the spot."

Austria about Vienna. Yet, when I occupied it, they began to speak differently. The same will happen to you. Your capital is Moscow, and not St. Petersburg, which is only the residence of your monarchs.' "

"But what a hypocrite he is!" exclaimed Dournoff. "He spoke of taking measures to prevent the ruin of Moscow, yet he blew up the Kremlin."

"This is not quite correct," said Fofo. "I have been told that the Kremlin has not been blown up. Only one tower . . . and even here a miracle happened. The tower crumbled under the terrible explosion, but one part of it remained whole, and on it, the miraculous image of St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker. Even the church-lamp and glass remained whole."

"Yes," said Evgueny from his place near the trellis. "You speak of a miracle. I also heard of a miracle from a wounded Italian officer who had been taken prisoner under the walls of Moscow and brought to our hospital. He lay next to me and asked me in French what my name was. I said it was Evgueny —Eugène. He looked at me and said: 'How strange. I am brought to this hospital and I ask my neighbor what his name is, and he tells me it is Eugène. And Eugène Beauharnais, Viceroy of Italy, is my immediate chief.'—'Well, what is there so strange about it!' I said. 'It is a mere coincidence.'—'No,' said the officer, 'it is not a coincidence, it is fate. The very air breathes of miracles in Russia. Do you know that a fortnight ago, the day before I was taken prisoner, a real miracle happened to my chief, Eugène Beauharnais? He himself told me about it.' "

Antonsky, that old Voltairian, who did not like this conversation about miracles, looked disapprovingly at Evgueny. The young man felt confused and grew silent. But the girls drew the sofa on which they were sitting up to him. shutting him off from the elder people and forming so to say their own separate little circle. Nadenka took his uninjured hand, and squeezing it gently, said in an undertone:

"Tell us about what you heard from the Italian, Jenia."

"I hope it is not a terrible ghost-story," said Fofo. "I always sleep badly when I hear one."

"No," said Evgueny with a smile. "This is not a terrible ghost-story, but the story of a miracle shown by the mercy of God to a foreigner. It has made a deep impression upon me, and the words of the Italian officer have remained in my memory. This is what he told me. . . ."

"After the battle of Borodino, the 4th Corps of the French Army, commanded by Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, Viceroy of Italy, stepson and adopted son of Napoleon and son of his much loved first wife Josephine, by her first marriage with Viscount de Beauharnais, who had been executed during the Revolution, was quartered for two days in the town of Rouza. On the 30th of August the Corps moved to Zvenigorod, and midway between Rouza and the latter town, passed the night in a bivouac. My wounded Italian was orderly officer to Prince Eugène. Night came on. A sentry stood near the Prince's tent. The officer lay down near the sentry on some corn-sheaves, wrapped in his greatcoat. Candles were burning in the tent and the black shadow of the Prince who sat writing at the table, fell on the canvas. The night was warm, quiet and stifling. In the distance, in the direction of Moscow, the sky was aflame with the glare of a fire. Elsewhere, heat-lightning flashed. A silent, late thunderstorm was coming on from the east. The officer could not fall asleep. Vague mental unrest had seized him. He sat up on his sheaves and watched the shadow of his Corps-commander. Prince Eugène continued to write. In the dim light that shone from the tent and lit up about ten paces around it, one could vaguely distinguish bushes, saddles heaped up on boxes, and the figures of sleeping attendants and orderlies. The sentry stood motionless. The stifling silence of the night began to feel threatening, and the officer felt an incomprehensible terror invade his soul. It was past mid-night. . . . Suddenly he saw the Prince's shadow straightening itself. He could see him rise, turn towards the entrance of the tent and, so it seemed to him, say something. The officer sprang to his feet, thinking the Prince was calling him. The flaps of the tent opened and the Prince stepped out. He wore his uniform, with

the great star of the *Légion d'Honneur* on his breast. His face looked agitated and anxious.

" 'Why do you let strange people enter my tent?' he asked the sentry in a sharp voice.

" 'Your Highness,' replied the sentry, 'I swear to you by the Virgin that not only did no one enter the tent, but no one even went near it.'

" 'Scoundrel! You lie! I shall put you under arrest!' shouted the Prince, usually so calm and so kind to his men.

" 'Your will is law,' said the sentry, 'but, Your Highness, the Lieutenant here was not asleep either. He can testify that there was no one.'

"And the sentry pointed to the Italian officer.

" 'Will you come here for a moment, Lieutenant?' said Eugène de Beauharnais, rapidly entering the tent. The officer followed him in. The Prince took him by the hand and said:

" 'I am afraid I was rather hasty just now. I was probably dozing and dreamt all this happened. But all the same it is very queer. I was writing letters. Suddenly I saw the flap of the tent being lifted, and an old man with a long white beard entered the tent. He wore the garb of a monk. His face was calm, kind, and serene. "What do you want?" I asked him. The old man replied: "Take steps to guard my monastery from destruction. If you do so, you will be one of the few who will return home unharmed, and your descendants will serve Russia." [49] I wanted to ask the old man who he was, but he had disappeared.'

" 'In what language did the old man speak to you?' asked the officer.

"The Prince looked confused.

" 'You make me ask myself the question. . . . But I really couldn't tell. Besides, apparitions do not speak any particular language. They suggest their thoughts to us, and we receive

[49] This prophecy was fulfilled. The Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna, daughter of the Emperor Nicholas I, married the Duke of Leuchtenberg, son of Eugène de Beauharnais. Their sons became members of the Russian Imperial Family and lived and served in Russia.

The author was an intimate friend of the late Duke George of Leuchtenberg, grandson of the Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna. It is highly probable that he heard the story from him. *(Translator's note).*

them in our own language. And, after all, I suppose it was simply a dream It's all nonsense, of course. Go to bed and don't talk to anybody about it.'

"The officer left the tent. Afterwards he saw the shadow of the Prince undressing, going to bed, and blowing out the candle.

"At dawn the Corps moved to Zvenigorod. Labaume, the Prince's aide-de-camp, had been sent on in front with the vanguard. The Prince rode at the head of his Corps, accompanied by the orderly officer to whom he had spoken of his vision in the night. Green hillocks covered with gardens appeared before them. White walls and towers, the blue cupolas of many churches rose above the green of the gardens. Soldiers belonging to the vanguard were crowding at the gates of the monastery. Labaume galloped forward to meet the Prince.

" 'What is this?' the Prince asked him.

" 'This is the Monastery of Saint Savva,' replied Labaume. 'We have been there, but found no one but a doorkeeper and four old monks praying before the tomb of a Russian saint. We demanded that they should open their secret store-rooms and hand over all their treasures. They replied that they were poor; that, following the rule of Saint Sergei Radonejsky [50] and of another Russian saint, Savva, founder of the monastery, they ate food which none of our men would deem fit to touch. . . . According to them, there are no treasures in the monastery except the tombs of their saints and their holy ikons. They implored us not to touch them.'

"The Italian officer noticed a thoughtful expression on the Prince's face as he listened to Labaume.

" 'Let's see what there is here,' he said, and rode up to the monastery, followed by his Staff.

" 'They rode through the chief gates and then through the

[50] A great Russian saint. Saint Sergei Radonejsky* (Sergius of Radonej) was the founder of the famous Troitzko-Serguéevskaia Lavra (Monastery) near Moscow renowned for the riches and treasures it contained. The bolsheviks have plundered it, stolen all its treasures, and left only the walls standing. The monastery is now closed and the monks dispersed.

* 14th century.

gates of the corner tower, and found themselves in a large courtyard paved with white flagstones, before the wide wall of a stone church. Deep silence reigned throughout the monastery.

"They went up the steps of the porch and entered the parvis. Suddenly the Prince seized the hand of his orderly officer and whispered:

"'Look. . . . There he is. . . .'

"They were standing before the large picture of an old man in monastic garb. His long white beard fell on his breast. His face shone with an inward light. His blue-gray eyes had a mild expression.

"The Prince could hardly restrain his emotion.

"'Labaume,' he said. 'Ask the monks who this is? Whose likeness is it?'

"'This is the picture of the monastery's Patron Saint, the blessèd Savva, favorite pupil of the blessèd Sergei of Radonej, who is specially revered by all Russians. Savva founded the monastery and was himself a monk in it,' Labaume, who understood Russian, translated the monk's reply.

"The Prince turned to his retinue and gave the order for special sentries to be set to guard the monastery, no one being allowed to enter it. The Prince himself remained a day and a night in the monastery with his orderly officer. He was unusually silent all the time and kept writing something. They left the monastery the next morning. The Prince took a kind leave of the monks and left a small body of men to guard the monastery. When they had ridden for about a verst, the Prince turned to look back, and the Italian officer followed his example. The gold crosses and blue domes of the churches burned in the rays of the rising sun. The white walls of the monastery glittered, and the green, yellow, and red leaves of its shady gardens formed a light and intricate lacey pattern. The Italian officer told me that this picture, steeped in indescribable spiritual beauty, remained forever in his memory. Prince Eugène checked his horse at the outskirts of a wood and looked long at the monastery. His face was thoughtful

and sad. The orderly officer guessed his thoughts and, wishing to divert his attention, spoke:

"'Your Highness! This may have been a clever trick after all. The monks may have sent someone to you secretly, made up to look like their saint. . . .'

"'Ah no, stop that!' the Prince interrupted him. 'This really happened. The saint himself appeared to me. Yet what a strange prophecy! But no one must be told about it. . . . And take care that God does not punish you for scoffing at sacred things. . . .'

"The orderly officer burst out laughing. That very evening firing was heard at the outposts, near to the Prince's General Headquarters. The Prince sent his orderly officer to reconnoitre. The latter imprudently rode into a wood, where he was wounded and taken prisoner."

Evgueny had finished his tale. All in the drawing-room were silent. Dournoff took a pair of snuffers from the table and snuffed the candles.

"I believe that all this really happened," said Sophie Meledinsky with a slight shiver.

"And you also believe that the descendants of the Prince will serve Russia?" asked Annette Bolkonsky.

"And why not? There are many French emigrants in Russia's service even now," said Fofo.

"But we should have to conquer and depose Napoleon first," said Dournoff, who had been listening attentively to Evgueny's tale.

"And so we shall," said Evgueny with conviction. "I believe with all my heart that the Russian saints will save Russia. . . . For God is with us!"

"God is with us," bleated Antonsky, "provided we do not do anything foolish."

This sally displeased everybody and no one replied.

Dournoff began to speak about Napoleon having sent General Lauriston to Field-Marshal Koutouzoff, ostensibly to negotiate an exchange of prisoners, but in reality with offers of peace.

"Our generals have grown too fond of talking of peace,"

came another bleat from Antonsky. "It is said that General Bennigsen had an interview with the King of Naples, which angered His Imperial Majesty very much."

Nadenka rose. She was afraid that Antonsky might say something which would upset her. Her head was already swimming. She pleaded fatigue and sought her bedroom.

XX.

TOWARDS the end of the first week of Nadenka's arrival in St. Petersburg with her mother, a Cossack appeared at Dournoff's house. The man had been dispatched by Platoff with some official papers to St. Petersburg, and Kouzma had taken the opportunity to send his wife a long and detailed letter. It had been written immediately after the battle of Borodino, and proved how much warfare and his native powers of observation had taught Kouzma, making him more serious and deepening his character. He even attempted a high-flown epistolary style, and only his spelling remained rather defective. But Nadenka herself was far from being perfect in Russian spelling, and could not, therefore, judge of it very well.

After preliminary greetings and many tender phrases and mythological epithets, where he compared Maria Alexéevna and Nadenka, on their journey from Moscow to St. Petersburg, to Calypso and Eucharis, Kouzma wrote of the dire losses he had sustained, which had left him fatherless and brotherless.

". . . On the 28th of June, in a cavalry attack at Mir against the Poles, my dear brother Ivan died the death of a hero on the battlefield. On the 25th of August (the eve of the battle of Borodino), my beloved father was killed. A French cannon-ball tore his leg off. He was in such pain that he could not even dismount, but was supported by Essaoul [51] Mironoff as far as the dressing-station. Here they lifted him down from his horse. The Ataman galloped up, and then I. We found my father lying on a carpet, bleeding to death. Seeing our

[51] Captain of Cossacks.

Ataman, he said: 'Drive the enemy back and I'll die happy to hear it.' Without saying a word, the Ataman stood beside Father, who kept raising himself and asking how the fight went. His face was getting whiter and whiter, and a cold sweat came out on his brow. 'Lift me up,' he said. I want to see what our men are doing.' Lazareff and I raised Father, but he could not open his eyes. 'I can't see,' he said almost inaudibly. 'We are winning,' said the Ataman. 'God grant it!' said Father, and fell dead in our arms."

Nadenka stopped reading and fell to musing, with her eyes full of tears. "How strangely they die!" she thought. "His son was standing there—why didn't he bless him? He might have remembered that Kouzma was married. Yet he seemed to care for me . . . sent me such lovely presents! But all they think of is fighting and victory. . . . And when Vania was dying, I suppose he didn't think of me, nor even of his Liouba. Yet we were brought up together. . . . What a terrible thing war is!"

She went on reading the letter, and far-off warlike pictures, incomprehensible and terrible, passed before her mental vision. One by one, the pages written by a beloved hand fell into her lap.

". . . The battle at the village of Semenovskoyé, where the Ataman had sent me with a report to Prince Bagration, had flared up with redoubled fury. Seven hundred fire-breathing cannon, set up over a distance of not more than one square verst, swept the small plain before Semenovskoyé, vomiting death on defenders and attackers alike. At that terrible hour, numerous columns of the enemy's infantry and cavalry firmly advanced towards this fatal plain, where hell seemed to have been let loose. The Russians attempted in vain to stop them by means of a heavy fire. Seeing that things were turning in the enemy's favor, Prince Bagration ordered his troops to advance. The whole line of columns of our left wing fell on the enemy with the bayonet. It was terrible! Neither side wished to yield, and victory seemed to hang on the issue of that moment. Dreadful carnage followed, unbelievable prodigies of valor taking place on both sides. Foot and horse regiments

had mingled, presenting the terrible sight of a huge mass of men who fought hand to hand in a fury of despair. . . ."

Nadenka's eyes sped over the sheets. Reason told her that Kouzma must be alive and well, since he had written and sent off this letter from Moscow, yet, reading of all those horrors, she mentally saw his white face among the heaps of slain.

It was then that Nadenka understood, with a clarity and strength never before experienced, how much she loved Kouzma.

"My dear—my darling!" she thought, pressing the letter to her breast. "O God! when will this war be over? O God! send him safe back to me!"

In the wave of yearning love towards the distant Kouzma that flooded her being, there mingled a love not less strong, but sweet and tender, towards Kouzma's unborn child.

Nadenka rose and went up to the window. She could see the Neva rolling its agitated waves, deeply blue, in the glitter of the autumn sun. The dark-red towers of the Stock-Exchange, with their ornamental Neptunes and green tritons, seemed quite near. At the sight, Nadenka recollected Kouzma's ingenuous and far fetched similies of Calypso and Eucharis, and, somehow, this quaint little memory filled her heart with anguish and pity.

"Dear one—beloved! O God! spare him—for without him I cannot, will not live!"

PART FOUR

I.

EVGUENY was approaching Moscow in a sledge, along a road which seemed but little used. Fields stretched in every direction, sleeping beneath their mantle of snow. Villages were but faintly marked by a trickle of smoke from their roofs. Each forest pine wore a white cap; frosty silver lace adorned birches and alders. The bell of the sledge tinkled merrily, and the driver—wearing a cap and fur-coat of dogskin, with a red woollen scarf round his neck—waved his whip and sang, in a cracked voice, about his native village "laid bare and waste. . . ."

Together with the wintry cold, it seemed as though spiritual and bodily strength flooded Evgueny's being, as though ache of conscience and ache of unstifled love were buried beneath the white snow.

Moscow appeared as a heap of ruins, deserted by its inhabitants. The sledge passed stone walls which had neither roofs nor windows. Where gardens used to be, were scorched and blackened trees, mingled with heaps of rubbish covered with snow. Further on came desolate spaces where only sooty chimneys thrust grimly into the sky.

Having promised to do so, Evgueny drove to the Arbat[1] to see what had happened to Dournoff's house. It was still standing, but these grisly chambers, where a frozen chill caught the breath, had nothing in common with the familiar, comfortable rooms of his recollection. Some of the furniture had been carried off; some of it had been replaced by that belonging to strangers. Cupboards had been broken open, books torn to shreds, many window-panes shattered. There were streaks of snow on the parquet floors. Bits of broken crockery crunched

[1] A fashionable quarter of Moscow.

underfoot. Some of the pictures had vanished, whilst others had been cut out of their frames and were lying about, cut to pieces or slashed.

Evgueny wanted to report all this to Dournoff on the spot. He sat down to a table, but his fingers were so stiff with cold that he decided to write his letter later on.

He left the house and drove further.

Here and there, Moscow was coming timidly to life again. Workmen were busy about some churches, clearing out rubbish and getting them ready for re-consecration. Booths and canvas tents stood in several of the squares, where meat and bread, frozen fish, vegetables and groceries, were being sold. They were crowded with peasant women muffled in shawls and fur-coats, and also had a few townsfolk for customers.

Nobody was allowed into the Kremlin. The walls which had been damaged by the explosion were visible from a distance, as also a tower near which people clustered. Evgueny came closer. People were gazing at, and crossing themselves before the ikon of St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker, the glass and lamp of which had not even been splintered by the explosion. In the square stood a small table covered with a cloth, holding an ikon and a plate filled with copper coins. An old priest, wearing a stole over his fur-coat, was blowing on the embers in his censer, for services were going on almost without intermission.

Evgueny drove round the Kremlin, on his way to the Smolensk gate. Over the burnt-out streets, with here and there a house standing whole, hung a death-like hush. Although it was going on for four o'clock, no church bells were ringing, no voices rose in the frosty air, and even the undestroyed houses, their broken windows occasionally nailed up with planking, reminded one of sepulchres. Cold as from the grave streamed from them. Ravens moved, croaking, among the blackened branches of garden trees.

Beyond the city itself, the roads had been damaged by the troops.

Warmer weather had set in after the first frosts, and the snow had begun to thaw. The ceaseless stream of wagons

had pitted the road. Occasionally a sweetish, sickly, stifling odor, that of rotting corpses, came from fields near by. Horses' legs stuck up through the snow, with a worn horseshoe glittering on some shrivelled hoof. As the sledge went by, hordes of dogs rushed away, their eyes glaring, bits of carrion hanging from their jowls. Peasants were busy in the fields, their spades gleaming. Well to one side, a Cossack sat hunched upon his horse, his face tied in a rag against the smell. Turning to Evgueny and pointing with his whip-handle, the driver spoke:

"Burying folk, they are. Burying and burying these two months, and no end to it yet! Lord knows how many dead there be, ours and his . . . the enemy's. . . . Go and bury 'em! That's the cry for two hundred versts around, and further on it's much worse. Us drivers won't go out, come nightfall."

Here and there, the ground between high trees, a-gleam with melting snow, was so blocked as to be absolutely impassable, traffic being deflected into a narrow path which passed over a ditch. The shafts of vehicles, gun-limbers, and iron-bound wheels rose above the snow surface, mingled with the corpses of men and horses. The appalling stench of decaying bodies filled the air again, catching Evgueny by the throat and making his head swim.

"You saw, eh?" asked the driver, turning towards his passenger a face reddened and glazed by the fresh wind. "He's on the run, is Boney! And won't return any more, nor forget Mother Moscow in a hurry. There'll be no road back for him. . . . Just see how he's throwing everything away—what he took from us, and his own cannon and ammunition! He's on the run. . . ."

Here the driver regained the highway, and, turning once more towards Evgueny, continued speaking:

"Folk who have seen say that the French are running crazily, all mixed—generals, officers, soldiers, all in a heap! Hardly any armed, too; most of 'em just rambling along with bare hands. Taking no end of carts along, with women, and wenches, and sick folk—but no food. And the stink of 'em in a hut, they say, is no better than corpses. The stuff they

eat, belike—carrion. Ay! things aren't going well with the French!"

"What about us?" asked Evgueny.

"You mean Koutouzoff? Yon's a man. And our troops move in decent order, like soldiers should. March two days, then rest in a village. Bands playing, and singers. All wear the same kind of greatcoats, no women's wear for our lads, like the French! And wine to drink every day, and their meat ration half a pound daily, that I'll swear! Only last week I drove an officer, and he told me. . . . Once it happened that Koutouzoff rode up to a company, when, as bad luck would have it, there was no meat. Lord! the fuss he made! Disgrace for the company commander, and trouble for the Colonel. To put it shortly, there's order everywhere. Our men have their belly full and their back sleek. Saluting their officer that smart! And there must be no running into *izbas* and looting neither; orders are very strict about it. Can't be done."

"But aren't our men chasing the French?"

"Of course they are! Cossacks at their heels all the while. And then those partisans[2] . . . and any stout fellow who can find a weapon. . . . Don't get any mercy from either, the French don't, and either of them take him prisoner."

"Has there been any fighting?"

"Fighting, eh?" The driver—a steady, sober fellow of about forty, owner of his own sledge and horses—shook his head reproachfully and repeated the word: "Fighting? What for? When the French are running as it is. Why stop 'em? Why should there be any fighting, like? There's no need."

II.

"THERE's no need. . . ." The peasant's ingenuous phrase stuck in Evgueny's memory. Whenever he subsequently heard the impassioned speeches of officers—chiefly those belonging to the Staff—and of all sorts and conditions of civilians, accusing

[2] In the Russian sense. Free-lances.

Koutouzoff of dilatoriness, indecision, and even of cowardice, he remembered that not very cold, dull winter's day, the wind which blew over the fields and brought with it the sickly stench of carrion, and the sleigh-driver's wide, simple, bearded face, his gray eyes with light eye-lashes, the strong smell of onion, sheepskin, cheap tobacco, and tar which hung about the man, and that decided, simple, all-explanatory, ingenuous phrase: "There's no need."

"Koutouzoff was right!" thought Evgueny. "With the wisdom of his eighty years, he has understood the mentality and spirit of his humble countrymen better than anybody—that spirit which has no thirst for glory—and is conducting his campaign as the Russian people, and not those in high places, would have it."

In a large village beyond Smolensk, Evgueny came upon the Guards Cavalry in billets. All the yards were full of horses, picketed or standing in sheds, and the village street was pitted with their hoofs. From each *izba*[3] came the sound of voices, songs, and shouting and the largest of all—probably that of the *starosta*[4]—had its windows open. The regimental band of the Life-Guards Hussars were playing something sweet and tuneful in the yard, and loud voices could be heard from within.

The Life-Guards Cossacks were billeted further on, beyond the Hussars. Evgueny had long been hoping for an opportunity to meet somebody belonging to this regiment, so as to send Kouzma a letter from his wife announcing the birth of their son, and a parcel containing a tobacco-pouch worked by Nadenka herself. It was of red velvet with a dark-blue border; on it was embroidered in the tiniest possible glass beads, a Life-Guards Cossack in his red jacket, mounted on a black horse and holding a lance. It was a very difficult piece of fine work, and Maria Alexéevna had often scolded Nadenka for ruining her eye-sight over it.

Nadenka had written two letters. She had entrusted one of them to a wounded Cossack who was returning to his regiment, and the other, together with the parcel, to Evgueny.

[3] Peasant's house.
[4] Village-bailiff.

The young man told his driver to stop before an "izba" whose yard was crowded with Cossack horses, and had barely had time to ask a strapping Cossack where Cornet Minaieff was billeted, when Kouzma himself ran out of the "izba." He wore no greatcoat over his unbuttoned red jacket and wide dark blue trousers; his hair was ruffled and his cheeks were reddened, and there was a perfect aura of good looks, good health, and happy, gallant dash about him. He gathered Evgueny to him in a bear's hug. Then he tore himself free for an instant, wrung Evgueny's hand hard, gazed at him with large, shining, humid eyes, and started hugging him all over again.

"Jenia, dear old fellow!" he said at last, tearing himself free and stepping back a pace. "Forgive me for not being quite sober—but, in the first place, I have just had news that all is well and my little Ivan has been christened. Lord! what happiness! Nadia wrote herself . . . his eyes are dark-brown, like mine. But, like a fool, I had wanted his eyes to be dark-blue, like Nadenka's. Now wasn't I a fool? He's a boy, and what does a boy want with dark-blue eyes? Nadenka knew, of course, that she'd bring a boy into the world. She writes that his eyes are just as dark as Greek currants. . . ."

Evgueny interrupted this flow of words to hand Kouzma Nadenka's letter and parcel, and Kouzma hugged him yet again, and then went on speaking:

"That's one thing. And the second thing," he said in tones portending wonderful news, "is that the Emperor has created our Ataman Count of the Russian Empire for his victory at Smolensk! It was time, you know, for the old man was worrying and chafing in the belief that he had been forgotten. . . . And the third thing is that we are chasing and surrounding Bonaparte. I can't tell you how many prisoners, cannon, and eagles we have captured. And all this means that peace is in sight. And where are you off to—back to the Toula Regiment, eh? Ah! I've heard of your great deeds, dear lad! And you've been wounded. . . . You lucky fellow!"

"I am going to join Tchitchagoff's Army. I have been named adjutant to the Admiral."

"Is that so? All owing to maman, eh?"

Evgueny nodded in silence.

"Well, it's only what ought to happen, when you come to think about it."

"What do you mean?" Evgueny pricked up his ears.

"Well—look how well educated and learned you are. And you jabber French just like a Frenchman. So who could have been made an adjutant, if not you? If need be, you could spy out things in the enemy camp, like Fiegner [5] did, and come back with nobody there any the wiser. No Frenchman would suspect you."

Kouzma flung an arm affectionately round Evgueny's shoulder and drew him towards the "izba."

"And how are they all at home?" he asked. "Tell me everything—how Nadenka got on. She writes that she did not suffer, but how could that be? She does not want to speak of it . . . she's proud. . . . And she's so happy, she says. . . . And how is maman? Does she think less hardly of me? Is she glad to have a grandson? I'm so glad that he has been christened Vania,[6] as my father and brother were both called Ivan. You see, I was afraid you might choose one of the names on your side of the family—Nikolai,[7] perhaps, or Stepan [8] in honor of Dournoff. He's a nice fellow, Stepan Fedorovitch—but I don't like him."

"Why not?"

"Because he's a civilian."

"That's foolish, Kouzma! All can't be officers."

"I know it's foolish. But then I'm not clever myself."

They were walking along the yard, stopping every now and then. Kouzma kept wanting to put yet another question about "the family," or specially about his son.

"And is my Marat still alive? He doesn't get badly treated by maman? And he hasn't forgotten to put out a candle with

[5] A well-known "partisan" of the time, celebrated for his heroic deeds.
[6] Diminutive for "Ivan" (John).
[7] Nicholas.
[8] Stephen.

his paw, I hope? Lord! if one could see all that for an instant —just a single moment!"

Kouzma pushed open a door swollen with damp, and they entered a small "izba" with a clay floor, over which lay straw. There was little room to move. Officers of Kouzma's squadron —His Majesty's first squadron of the regiment—and with them, Prince Serbedjab-Tiumen, sat on benches round a table covered with bottles and tin drinking cups. Evgueny knew them all; they had all been at Kouzma's wedding. They looked enormous in this low-ceilinged room. Two Cossacks fussed over something they were cooking at the big stove.

Gay exclamations greeted Evgueny.

He had already handed Kouzma Nadenka's letter and the parcel containing the tobacco-pouch, which was carefully wrapped in a silk handkerchief. But there was another parcel, and another surprise still in store for the happy young officer.

Kouzma unwrapped the parcel, rapturously kissed the tobacco-pouch and then handed it over to the officers who were crowding round him and looking over his shoulders.

"There! just look how beautifully Nadenka has embroidered it for me!"

"How beautifully worked. And all by her own little fingers," exclaimed his friends.

Whilst the officers examined the pouch, Evgueny took out of his traveling case another small parcel, containing a little miniature painted on ivory, representing a cherubic infant lying on a white pillow. Kouzma gazed at the baby for a long while. His eyes filled with tears.

"Our son—a little Cossack . . ." he said with emotion.

Close to Kouzma stood one of the Cossacks who had been cooking at the stove, and had walked over to look at the tobacco-pouch. Holding the portrait out to him, Kouzma said:

"What do you think of that, eh? It's our son Ivan."

The man gazed long, then sighed and handed the miniature to the other Cossack.

"Have a look, Boyarskoff," he said; "that's our son. A little Cossack, and no mistake!"

When all had had a look at them, Kouzma put both his

presents into a small box made of birch-bark, which he packed into one of the saddlebags which were lying on the floor in a corner of the "izba."

"What are we about?" he cried suddenly. "Are we Life-Guards Cossacks, or are we not? And forgetting a guest. . . . He must be given a bite . . . and a drink."

He turned to the two Cossacks.

"Here, you—Boyarskoff, Pykhovkin! Bring wine! We'll make him drink deep. He has been wounded, gentlemen. . . . He's won the St. George's Cross! That's the kind of little brother I've got!"

And Kouzma set about hugging Evgueny once more.

Night had fallen when Evgueny left the Life-Guards Cossacks' bivouac after a rather wild carouse. He had not drunk much, and his head was clear. Kouzma also was by now almost sober and very quiet. In his crumpled, unfastened jacket, without a greatcoat or anything on his head, he took Evgueny by the arm and led him to the outskirts of the village. Behind them came the sledge, its bells tinkling faintly in the silent street.

It was a warm night, and the sky was full of stars. Snow and stars combined to create that strange, wintry, Russian twilight in which everything takes on a sad, unearthly beauty. All trampled and pitted by the hooves of countless horses, the thawing snow looked like the frozen ripples of a river. A warm southerly wind blew in gentle gusts, seeming to push against their faces and playing with Kouzma's long, dark chestnut hair as he walked silently beside Evgueny, breathing in, in audible gulps, the fresh air that drove away the last remnants of his inebriety.

They reached the highway, planted with four rows of tall birch trees. Evgueny's sledge, and the Cossacks detailed to escort him, had passed on in front and had stopped waiting for him. The men were lighting their pipes and the night seemed darker still after the bright flicker of tinder-boxes had died away. All around were fields covered with a silvery mantle. Solemn, unbroken stillness reigned, such as can only be on a

winter's night in the open, and the faint sound of a military band from beyond the village, where the Lancers stood, only seemed to enhance it.

Evgueny and Kouzma halted.

"So you have forgiven me, Kouzma?" said Evgueny in a low voice.

"Why speak of it, Jenia? You have been wounded, have shed your blood, and received the Cross of St. George for what you did at Polotzk. That was making atonement a hundred times over. . . . And it wasn't for me to judge you, besides."

"And I'll repay my debt to you."

"How dare you say such a thing, Evgueny I won't have you even mention it. . . . Lord! isn't it a lovely night? . . . Tell me, Evgueny, do you ever feel the presence of God? Close, you know—quite close. . . . So close that if one spoke He would hear; if one stretched out a hand for aid, He would help. . . ."

Kouzma gripped Evgueny's hand with both his own. Evgueny's long, slim, aristocratic fingers were drowned in the big, warm clasp.

"You have a lot of book learning, Evgueny—you've learnt geometry, planimetry, and astronomy at the Naval Corps. But, although I was 'finished' at Jacquinot's, I feel simple and uneducated. Sometimes, if I start talking before strangers, I see your mother screwing up her lip contemptuously. But Nadenka smiles and her dimples begin to show. Only Nadenka understands me—and perhaps Nurse Matvéevna. . . . What made me start talking of this? Well, I'll explain. We have taken so many prisoners, and none of them believe in God. I simply can't understand it! Last week, Evgueny, we captured a wagon train and there was a Frenchman with it—not an officer, but some learned man. One of their professors, you know. I got into talk with him, and didn't I pity the man! He knew everything—where this or that star was to be seen, and what was the cause of what. I talked and talked with him almost the whole night through, and when morning came I walked out, thinking to myself: 'Well, he knows nothing, even though he is a learned man.' Because, Evgueny, he knew nothing of God. He said

that the world just revolved, just turned round. 'Talk as much as you like,' thought I. 'If the world really turned, our heads would spin as well.'"

"You're not talking seriously, Kouzma?"

"Well, so far as the world is concerned, I'm joking, of course. . . . But this is how I feel. You and I are standing here, together, and the snow cools your foot pleasantly through the boot. And you catch the scent of the snow, eh? It smells a little of water and of something else—reminds one of that scent in the air during a thunderstorm, and of the smell of the thawing earth. . . . In a word, it smells of spring. . . . And the wind has brought a whiff of smoke, and a scent of houses and hay-ricks. The birches are whispering, and it seems as though everything had a purpose, as though one thing fitted into the other. Oh! how can I explain my thought to you! Just look at the beautiful sky—nothing but stars and stars, without end. But they shine with a purpose, Evgueny, for they deck the mantle of the Mother of God. And He is in everything, Evgueny, and everywhere. He is between us now—Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And then you ask me if I've forgiven you? How can I have anything against you, when I feel Christ beside me?"

"And yet—don't you remember hesitating to take my hand?"

"Forgive me!" Kouzma gripped Evgueny's hand. "Forgive me, as a brother should. I wasn't angry with you, Evgueny, but at the fact that you left your friends to their fate. . . . But my dead father used to say that it didn't matter if one fell, only if one didn't get up again. Perhaps you did fall, but you certainly did pick yourself up again. And now you've been given the Cross of St. George. You nearly died getting it, but this is how I look at things in my foolish way: I don't pity Father and Vania for having died; I envy their happy fate. They gave up their lives for their faith, their Emperor and their country. They are now where God is, crowned in Paradise. Mary, the Mother of God, stretched out Her white hands to them and brought them up to the Lord's Throne. I believe there is no greater happiness than to die for one's faith, one's Emperor, and one's country."

Kouzma's voice shook.

"For those three things!" he said. "A wooden cross above his grave should be a soldier's greatest reward, or even a grave with no cross at all. For that grave is an honor, a distinction permitted by God. And this is what I think of Nadenka. Had I been killed instead of my brother, she and little Vania would have remembered me without ceasing, prayed for me, spoken lovingly of me—a hero. . . ."

"It's all very well to talk like that, Kouzma, but what would they have felt? And have you forgotten Liouba, who was to have married Ivan? What of her?"

"I've seen her—seen her sorrow. But her tears are not bitter, but holy. . . . And everybody there, at home, on the Don, understands, thinks as I do. As the bride-to-be of a dead soldier, she has been set on a pedestal by the people of our 'stanitza.' Ah! death is sometimes an enviable thing. . . . Think of the scrapes one might get into here below, like I did with Emmotchka. . . . Anything might happen!"

Kouzma fell silent. After a while he suddenly put a question, quickly and roughly:

"And about what's his name—that dashed Macaroni fellow —I mean Fofo? Does he come to your house? Does he make love to her, eh?"

"What nonsense! How can you think so of Nadenka?"

"Well, I don't really think it. . . . But he's so clever, you know. He might get round Nadenka with his talk."

"Don't say such things, Kouzma. . . . They're too foolish for words. If you only knew how much Nadenka cares for you!"

"You're right, Evgueny—it's foolish. I feel ashamed of myself, for it's God who gave Nadenka to me—she was a gift from Him. Yet why should I have had it? Was I more worthy than any other man?"

Kouzma went on speaking with emotion:

"Just think, Evgueny, how many Frenchmen I've killed with my own hand, and yet I cannot earn the Cross of St. George anyhow, and can't get wounded. For a wound is also a decoration, but one sent by God. Once a Cuirassier aimed a mighty

blow at me, but either his sword was blunt, or only the flat of it hit me, but there wasn't even a bruise to show. Honestly, I seem to bear a charmed life; not even my horse has been more than scratched. A bullet just grazed Vorontchik . . . well, I've chattered enough, but you don't know how much I have enjoyed our talk. You remind me so of her. . . ."

Kouzma smiled shyly and ended in some confusion: "Of Nadenka."

He held Evgueny close and hugged him thrice.

"Well—good-bye! You must be off now, otherwise we'll talk till dawn, like I talked with that Frenchman . . . Good-bye!"

Letting go of Evgueny, he almost pushed him into the sledge, then stood watching whilst the latter took his seat and the Cossacks mounted. As the sledge skimmed off and its bell began to tinkle, Kouzma called gaily and cheerily after it, as a Cossack should:

"Good luck!"

III.

EVGUENY had promised his friend Stolnikoff, who had also left the Fleet for the Army, and had got himself attached to the 14th Foot Chasseur Regiment forming part of the Danube Army commanded by Admiral Tchitchagoff, to look him up as soon as possible. And now he had found him in a field-hospital at the *Vollwark*[9] Paleleevka.

Stolnikoff lay on a straw mattress above a plank bed. His face was white, but on each cheek burnt a feverish spot which looked like paint. Those kind gray eyes of his seemed enormous, forehead and temples appeared to be molded of wax. His fair hair lay tumbled on his forehead. His clean-shaven, hairless face reminded Evgueny of those waxen images which were sold in the arcades of the "Gostiny Dvor" during Palm-Week in St. Petersburg.

[9] Small estate.

"Good-day, Evgueny! So you've come at last. Take a seat."

Stolnikoff made a weak gesture towards the foot of the bed.

"Well, how are you?" asked Evgueny, taking Stolnikoff's hot, dry hand in his own.

"As you see."

Quite involuntarily, Evgueny cast a glance over the bed, then reddened furiously. He felt all the blood pulse away from his heart, and his legs grew heavy. The blanket covering Stolnikoff fell sharply down on one side and lay flat on the mattress, outlining but one leg. It was a strange and dreadful thing to see that solitary leg stretched out under the blanket.

Stolnikoff understood what was passing in Evgueny's mind, and the feverish spot on each cheek glowed yet more brightly.

"Yes," he said in a low and piteous voice. "They cut it off yesterday. . . . The surgeon says I'm getting on well. They'll make me a leather thing padded with tow, and fix a maple peg to the leather. So I'll be able to walk like the wind, it seems, without any danger of ever suffering from gout in that leg. . . . He's fond of his joke, is the surgeon."

"You're feverish, Alexander?"

"That's no matter—I'm told there should be fever. . . . Yes, my Oletchka will have cause for tears now! God has sent her much sorrow. . . . You've heard about her father's, Captain Kolomyitzeff's, death, haven't you?"

"Good Heavens! What are you saying?"

"He was drowned. His transport had some five hundred infantry-men and six cannon aboard. There was a fearful storm just before he reached Revel, on the 25th of August, and the over-loaded ship became water-logged and sank. Not a man was saved!"

"God rest the soul of Vsevolod Stepanovitch."

"You see, Evgueny, how matters have turned out. Oletchka will be all by herself now, and God only knows what will happen to me. So just listen, Evgueny. . . . It is a good thing you came, for I wanted to say something to you. And I'm going to beg you to carry out my wish."

Stolnikoff stopped speaking, and looked long and attentively at Evgueny.

"Well, what is it?" asked the latter.

"Listen. . . . Oletchka has nobody to care for her now. . . . She is alone with Poushok, her tom-cat. Gordienko kept his word, and brought him back to her, you know. Well, when Oletchka saw me off, she said: 'Daddy has gone, and you are going. There is only Poushok left.' She said it so sadly! And now, you see, things have happened as she said; she has nobody but Poushok left. For you can see of how much use I am!"

"Don't talk like that! You will get well, Alexander."

"What do you call getting well? My leg won't grow again, will it? Evgueny, do you remember what you once said to me when we were prisoners, all verminous, dirty, and unshaven? You said: 'What if your Oletchka could see you now?' And I replied: 'She would love me all the more.' I repeat those words now: Oletchka would receive me joyfully and would love me still. And she'd marry me, what's more! But that is not what I wanted to speak about."

Stolnikoff fell silent again. His hand moved restlessly over the blanket, as though looking for something.

"What is it then?"

"If I were to die. . . . Promise me, Evgueny—promise to take my place."

Without thinking, Evgueny gripped Stolnikoff's hand hard and said warmly:

"I promise."

"Then swear it."

"Don't be foolish, Alexander! Of course you are going to live."

"No! you must swear."

"Very well! I swear it."

"Thank you, my friend. You will tell her, afterwards, that it was my wish. And, if God wills, she will love you too."

Stolnikoff began to weep, his shoulders heaving like that of a child. The doctor, who had just come into the room, asked Evgueny to leave, as any excitement was bad for the wounded man.

IV.

A Cossack who was passing through Paleléevka told Evgueny that the Army Commander must be quite near, at Shebashevytchy, where his Headquarters had been ready for him since morning.

The Admiral had taken up his quarters at the manor, and Evgueny found the Staff deep in the bustle of temporarily settling down. All looked displeased, upset, and worried.

The Admiral received Evgueny at once in the owner's study, where home-made carpets smelt of dogs, and muslin curtains shaded the room. Papers and maps were spread out on a large writing-desk. It was cold in the room, and a serf of the proprietor's, a White-Russian peasant with flaxen hair, was lazily lighting the stove.

The Admiral, wearing his black naval uniform and all his decorations (he had not had time to undress and lie down after a sanguinary battle that had just taken place near Borissov, on the Berezina) was rapidly pacing up and down the room. His Chief of Staff, stout General Sabanéeff, sat at the table and munched a ship's biscuit, holding a glass of tea in one hand and a pair of compasses in the other. Crumbs were falling from his puffy lips. Major-General Berg, the A.C.S., a lean, dry man with a German clean-shaven face, stood with his crooked legs apart, watching the peasant as he lit a splinter from the tinder. On a wide sofa with a torn and rubbed covering, sat Major-General Touchkoff, holding a thoroughbred setter on his knees, and beside him was a young officer in naval uniform, whom Evgueny recognized at once as being the Admiral's adjutant, a Swede named Nordstrem, who had been his schoolmate in the Naval Corps.

"Glad to see you," said Tchitchagoff, stopping in front of Evgueny. "I need adjutants just now! Had we not better send him to Count Pahlen?" he said, turning to Sabanéeff. "Pahlen ought to join us. What's the use of his sticking there?"

"We must wait a bit, your Excellency," said Sabanéeff. "A report has just been received from Tchaplitz to the effect that French cavalry has appeared near Stoudianka. They pretend to water their horses, but the same horses come over and over again and don't even drink; only the men are different. Are they not reconnoitering?"

"Near Stoudianka?" laughed the Admiral. "Why, we have been getting reports for two days from Oukholoda that timber is being brought and boats built there. But I don't believe that either. . . . Well," he said, turning to Evgueny, "tell me all about your mother. How is she?"

Evgueny thanked the Admiral and said that he had left his mother in good health in St. Petersburg.

"Did you pass through Moscow? How are things there? Did you see anything of the Commander-in-Chief's Army? Did you see him personally?"

Evgueny told him all he had heard in St. Petersburg and seen in Moscow, and further on the road to Smolensk. All the generals listened to him attentively. Tchitchagoff stood before him with his hands in his pockets, swaying backwards and forwards on toes and heels.

"Is that so—is that so?" he said when Evgueny confused by the general attention paid to his words, had finished speaking. "I have heard these tales long since. . . . Napoleon is running away. Yet all the prisoners I have taken assert that he has an army of a hundred thousand men left. There is no need to run away with an army of a hundred thousand men. I certainly consider this figure exaggerated, but he must, I suppose, have about fifty thousand well armed and well equipped men and 200 cannon with a sufficiency of ammunition."

Tchitchagoff turned to Sabanéeff and continued irritably, as though complaining to him of Koutouzoff:

"And I have only twenty thousand, and my artillery consists of nothing but mounted companies. And my Army also consists mainly of cavalry. What can cavalry hope to do in those woods? Schwarzenberg's Army is behind me. The inhabitants. . . ."

The Admiral turned towards the stove.

"Berg, send away that fool. What is he fussing over the stove for? It is burning all right."

When the man had gone, Tchitchagoff went on:

"The inhabitants are hostile. During the battle near Borissov they tried to loot my carriages, which I had left in the wood. Do you remember, Alexei Danilovitch," he said to Touchkoff, "that I had to send my escort to guard them. An unheard of piece of impudence! And with these scanty forces, I am supposed to defend the river over a distance of fifty versts, from Vesseloyé to Berezino. His Majesty held out hopes of Count Wittgenstein's co-operation, and promised me Steingel's thirty-five and Ertel's fifteen thousand men. Koutouzoff, in his turn, was to have attacked the French on the right bank of the river. Nothing could have been better. But Napoleon has already reached the Berezina, and there is no sign of Generals Wittgenstein, Ertel and Steingel."

"Your Excellency," said Berg in a wooden sort of voice. "When we were leaving Borissov to-day at dawn, I heard cannon in a north-easterly direction."

Tchitchagoff waved him aside like a fly.

"It is too late. . . . Colonel Knorring, Governor of Minsk, writes that Schwarzenberg is close on my heels. The Saxons have entered Nesvij, afterwards proceeding to Novy Sverjen. I should like to know," said Tchitchagoff, addressing all the generals, "which way Napoleon will go?"

Sabanéeff, who had finished his tea, carefully brushed the crumbs off the map. All were silent. Tchitchagoff looked at Sabanéeff, as though waiting for an answer from him.

"That depends," said Sabanéeff at last, "on the state and condition of Bonaparte's Army. If they are such as described by the Lieutenant here, he will take the shortest route to Vilno, for he has large military stores there, and his Army is probably not capable of seeking fresh routes. If it is still capable of fighting, however, he may attempt to march on Minsk in order to join Schwarzenberg."

Tchitchagoff turned abruptly to Evgueny.

"Napoleon's Army," he said in a harsh voice, "cannot be in the state you describe. What you told me concerns strag-

glers and marauders, such as exist in every army, especially during such an extraordinarily difficult campaign. Napoleon is a genius, and has certainly managed to keep his army together. I myself watched the enemy, whose troops were disposed on the left bank of the river. Their camp-fires covered a wide area, and through the clouds of smoke which obscured the horizon, I could see the movement of troops, most probably endeavoring to conceal their real numbers and objective by cannon smoke and fires lit in several places."

The Admiral turned quickly towards Touchkoff.

"They keep saying that Napoleon has no cavalry, that he has given the remaining horses to his Marshals and generals, forming them into a sacred squadron to guard him. But who attacked Count Pahlen from Loshnitza? I saw with my own eyes regiments of Cuirassiers and Chasseurs-à-cheval in the field. Our regiments were cut off, and I don't even now know where they are."

"Your Excellency," said Sabanéeff, "those were evidently troops belonging to Oudinot's Corps, who were retiring before Wittgenstein's Army."

"I don't care who they were." Tchitchagoff went quickly up to the map, took the compasses from Sabanéeff's hand and began to mark out the distance on the map with them.

"Were I in Napoleon's shoes," he said, "I should march on Bobrouisk, along the Berezina, in order to cross there, then march on Igoumen, and thence to Minsk. It is probably what he will do."

The door half opened and an orderly non-commissioned officer of the Alekssandriysky Hussar Regiment announced:

"Your Excellency, an officer of Wittgenstein's Army requests an interview."

"Capital! Admit him. . . . We shall learn something now."

A young man, whose dress was half military and half that of a Polish hunter, entered the study. He wore a low fox-fur cap with ear-lappets tied at the top, a short frogged winter-coat lined with thick fur and reaching to the knee, trousers of

military cut and of a pale lilac shade, with two narrow white stripes, and high boots fastened at the knee by a leathern strap which had gone rusty-colored. He took off his cap, and his long fair hair fell over his cheeks down to his collar. A pair of sharp, light gray eyes shone in his thin face, which was reddened by the wind and full of character.

"Lieutenant Shpilevoy, of Colonel Dorokhov's [10] Partisan Detachment," he said in the hoarse voice of a man evidently suffering from a cold.

"I was told," said Tchitchagoff, frowning and drawing his thick black eyebrows together, "that you had come from Count Wittgenstein."

"Just so, your Excellency. My company and I lost sight of our detachment a fortnight ago, and came across General Count Wittgenstein's troops the day before yesterday. The Count asked me if I could make my way to your Excellency and take you a letter. I undertook to do it."

The partisan took from his bosom a packet which he handed to Tchitchagoff. The Admiral went up to the window, slit the envelope with a paper-knife and began to peruse its contents. Having finished reading the letter, he seized his head with both hands, then threw the letter down on the map and went up to Sabanéeff.

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!" he exclaimed. "Look! The Count writes that he will follow on the heels of the French, whom he has already caught up. And this instead of crossing the Berezina, joining me and holding the crossing together. All of them," exclaimed Tchitchagoff indignantly, "Koutouzoff, and Platoff, and Wittgenstein, are following, or going to follow, on the heels of Napoleon. They harrass him from the rear, so that he might attack me with greater fury. And I, with my twenty thousand men, scattered over a front of fifty versts, must detain and destroy the whole of Napoleon's Army! What do you think of that? And if Napoleon escapes, I alone will be responsible. Who is there?" he asked, turning to the

[10] Dorokhoff was a well-known "partisan" (volunteer or free-lance) in the war with Napoleon.

orderly non-commissioned officer who had once more looked in at the door.

"A Cossack of the Loukovkin Regiment, your Excellency."

"Admit him."

Wrapped in shawls, *bashlyks*[11] and peasant women's jackets, a Cossack with sabre and musket entered the room and stood with his legs apart. A *nagaika*[12] hung over his shoulder. Filling the room with the smell of forest dampness, he looked at the generals.

"What have you got to say?" asked Tchitchagoff.

"I've come from the post on the lower part of the river. Ice is floating on the surface. And the French have begun to build a bridge."

"Where are you quartered? What's the name of the village?" asked Sabanéeff.

"I've forgotten. . . . But it's written here. . . . Our company-commander put it down. . . . He's a clever one . . . an eagle! He knew I'd forget. And so I did."

The Cossack handed Sabanéeff a slip of paper.

"It's at Oukholody, your Excellency," said the Chief of Staff.

"Berg," said the Admiral, turning to the A. C. S., "transmit an order for General Roudzevitch to proceed to Oukholody immediately with two infantry regiments and six cannon, to reinforce the detachment there. You can go," he said to the Cossack.

All were silent for some time in the study. The partisan officer stood beside Evgueny whilst the Admiral paced gloomily up and down the room. The day was gray and overcast. Clouds hung low over the woods and the pines murmured softly.

A second Cossack arrived from Oukholody. This time it was a smart sergeant in a greatcoat and leathern shako. He stood to attention and reported:

"Your Excellency, the enemy, who had begun to build a

[11] Caucasian felt hood or cowl.

[12] Long Cossack's whip.

bridge at Oukholody this morning, has abandoned it and moved in two columns up the river to Borissov."

"May be," Sabanéeff said to Tchitchagoff, "your Excellency will give different orders to Roudzevitch? Tchaplitz is alone near Borissov."

"There is a ford at Oukholody," Tchitchagoff said wearily. "No need of a bridge there. No, let what I said stand. Let Roudzevitch keep watch at Oukholody."

Sabanéeff shrugged his shoulders.

"Your Excellency," he said insistently, "as a matter of fact, there's only Langeron with some disorganized regiments near Borissov. Tchaplitz has scattered his forces between Zembin and Brili and Borissov. He won't be able to come up in time along these wintry roads. If anything happens, they won't hold Borissov."

"And if anything happens at Oukholody? . . . If Napoleon is only tricking us?"

Tchitchagoff's voice was full of indecision.

"Perhaps Tchaplitz had better leave Zembin, concentrate at Brili, near Stoudianka, and be on the look-out there?" he said, manifestly wavering.

"He won't be able to hold Brili," said Sabanéeff.

"And what can I do?" exclaimed Tchitchagoff irritably. "They all drive the enemy forward from the rear, but no one surrounds him, nobody comes up to me. I am facing Napoleon's entire Army alone."

"An army which doesn't exist," said the partisan officer in a low voice.

"So you say—but there's enough of it left for me to tackle alone!"

Tchitchagoff went up to the window and stood with his back turned to everybody. His hands were clasped behind his back and his long, delicate fingers moved nervously.

Evgueny rose quietly and left the room. All this muddle and indecision in Tchitchagoff's General Headquarters made his heart ache vaguely. He remembered some words of Peter the Great which he had been taught at the Naval Corps: "A forest that has not been uprooted will soon grow again." Here

was an opportunity for surrounding and destroying Napoleon's Army, and they were letting this opportunity slip. Neither Koutouzoff, nor Platoff, nor Wittgenstein wanted to capture and annihilate Napoleon. Then he remembered something else he had learnt at school. Maurice of Saxony had said: "Build a golden bridge for the retreating enemy." All were building just such a bridge to let Napoleon escape. They did not want to let it come to a decisive battle; they were saving their troops. Evgueny recollected the driver from Smolensk and his simple peasant's phrase: "There's no need." Who was right? Peter the Great, or Maurice of Saxony and the ingenuous peasant? Which was best—to allow Napoleon to retreat, or to bar his way and annihilate him? If he escaped, what would happen? He would gather a new army together, and there would be another war which would last for years. A forest that has not been uprooted will soon grow again.

Evgueny went down the steps of the porch.

"What is the significance of human will and human intelligence, and what can they accomplish?" he thought. "Where will Napoleon cross the Berezina, near Borissov or near Oukholodovo? How is one to guess? Still, if all would attack him together, instead of stopping to guess, they would surely get the better of him."

Evgueny's own complex nature, however, allowed him to understand Tchitchagoff's indecision. In his place, he would not have known, either, how he was to act.

The garden lay under a pall of snow. The black colonnade of an avenue of lime trees sloped down to the pond, above which curled a slight mist. Beyond the pond was a church, and in the background rose low hills, snow covered and overgrown with tall dark forests. From beyond the latter came the infrequent and distant sound of gun-fire. Platoff's or Wittgenstein's Army, or perhaps even Koutouzoff's, was responsible for this.

A feeling of impotence, of the impossibility of getting anything done, invaded Evgueny. Like an on-coming attack of sea-sickness, it caused an unpleasant sinking of the heart.

"Everything depends on God," thought Evgueny with a

sudden feeling of indifference. "What can I do? An insignificant lieutenant. . . . When these men cannot, or perhaps do not wish to do anything at all. . . ."

His feet sinking from time to time in the porous thawing snow, Evgueny went aimlessly down to the pond.

"Napoleon is there, beyond the woods. . . . How strange it is to think of it! That same Napoleon whom Germaine showed me then, at the hunt. . . . So stout and important looking. . . . With what self-confidence he spoke to Prince Kourakin. He was sure of victory then. Is he still the same, or does he understand that all is lost?"

Evgueny stopped on the edge of the pond and strained his eyes, looking into the distance in an easterly direction, as though he could manage to distinguish Napoleon himself.

From the west there still came the infrequent, dull, and measured sounds of gun-fire.

V.

From the very day that the Grande Armée entered Moscow and began to loot it, Napoleon could not but realize that "the second Polish War" was lost, and that he had to think of peace and of returning to France. But he could not obtain peace. The Emperor Alexander was inflexible. The only thing left was—to go home without waiting for peace.

The French Army received the order to retreat along the Smolensk route, which had already been devastated by the French, along which the population had fled and there were no supplies. The days of the march went slowly and heavily by, and the nights seemed endless.

At the end of October there was a heavy fall of snow, such as Napoleon had never seen, even in the Alps. There on the high mountain passes, among the glaciers, the snow, lit up by the sun, seemed to smile with a friendly smile, and all knew that they had only to descend a little, and they would once more find green valleys, blue lakes and bubbling streams. Here the

snow was different, and had a gloomy look. It was everywhere, and it fell and fell in heavy flakes, obstinate and insistent, like was the whole of this enigmatic Russia. There was yet another thing that frightened Napoleon. It had not come suddenly, but had been creeping on gradually. May be, it had already begun in June, when King Jerôme reported that he could not follow Bagration, because there was no fodder for the horses and his men were exhausted. Or even, perhaps, when he himself, the Emperor, had felt a sharp pain in the region of his heart, a pain which might have been the precursor of some hidden disease. The same disease had broken out in the Army, and had ended by taking entire hold of it.

As a matter of fact, the Army had ceased to exist.

At first, as he passed by regiments on the road, Napoleon saw Cuirassiers in greatcoats with hoods and in helmets, following the infantry on foot, in separate squadrons. Then they mingled with the infantry. The cold of the bivouacs, where meagre wood-fires did not warm the men, caused them to throw away their cuirasses and helmets. Shawls and variegated stuffs, feminine attire, and lastly, rags, appeared on the men. With increasing frequency, the Emperor came across abandoned cases of ammunition, guns, and the bodies of horses. He saw more and more cavalry-men intermingled with infantry columns, and fewer and fewer horses.

It would perhaps have been better to unharness the horses and abandon those endless waggons filled with the sick and wounded, with women and children, and with loot from Moscow. Where did all those women and children come from? And why were there so many unarmed men?

Napoleon realized that he could not give the order to abandon the carts filled with loot. Those gold or silver frames and ornaments of ikons, those silks and brocades, china and pictures, carpets and furniture—all, in reality so much unnecessary trash—was what still made the Army cling to life.

Napoleon saw order disappear day by day in his Army. Generals and other officers walked in the same crowd as the men, clothed in the same rags, and unable, like himself, to give any orders.

Napoleon took care not to outdistance the slowly moving troops, and if the human torrent in front of him stopped, he also stopped and waited till it had moved on. He could not steel himself to pass those silent regiments and see the mute glances of officers and men following him. It was worse than any curses and reproaches.

In his immediate environment, however, outward order was still kept. According to the weather, a *vozok*[18] on runners or a closed carriage with a team of four horses, awaited his good pleasure each morning. His saddle-horse stood ready for him as before, and Roustam the Mameluke grinned with the same ecstatic expression at sight of the Emperor. The Court Marshal, His Majesty's equerry, nine A. D. C. Generals, twelve permanent orderly officers, Count de Turennes, first Master of the Ceremonies and Keeper of the Imperial Wardrobe, Baron de Bosset, Court Commandant, the Quartermaster, three other equerries, two secretaries, two civilian officials, a secretary translator, a Polish translator, two topographers, three pages, the Keeper of the Purse, and a squadron of the Old Guard, were permanently attached to the Imperial Headquarters. All seemed to be the same as before. Only the wintry cold and bad weather tarnished the glitter of the gold-embroidered uniforms and caused them to be replaced by fur-coats or cloaks lined with fur, and the horses of adjutants and orderly officers could not gallop as fast as before.

Now as formerly, when they halted for the night, everything was disposed in the order to which the Emperor was used, although not in a tent, but in the first peasant's izba that came handy. His usual small, low, comfortless camp-bed stood against the right wall. A table was placed opposite to the window and a low chair in front of it. On the table lay some paper and a bundle of colored quill pens; an inkstand, the Emperor's seal and a brass bell stood upon it. As before, the Emperor wrote letters and orders of the day, and officers of the Topographical Section spread maps out on the floor in the next room, and a pair of compasses awaited the Emperor as before.

[18] A closed sledge with the body of a coach.

Every evening, the Emperor called his Marshals together and gave them orders, as though they still commanded armies.

The Marshals stood before him with red, frost-bitten faces, their heads wrapped in shawls, breathing heavily and exhaling an unpleasant odor. Bits of leather were twisted round their torn boots and fastened with a string, their clothes hung in tatters. The brilliant Murat had a bright-colored woollen shawl with pink flowers wrapped round him. They looked like tramps and their eyes roved hungrily about the room, as though looking for something to eat.

The Emperor did not seem to notice anything. He paced up and down the room, taking little steps, stopping before the map spread out on the bed, taking hold of the compasses and saying in an even voice:

"Our base is ready for us. . . . Macdonald, St. Cyr, Wrede, Victor and Dombrovsky are in the Duchy of Warsaw. Augereau between the Elbe and the Niemen, and the Duke of Bassano in Vilno, have concentrated enormous supplies. Our Army is moving to the river Berezina, its objective being to cross the river. The vanguard. . . . Marshal Davout. . . ."

"Your Majesty," said a hoarse voice, the voice of a man suffering from a bad cold, unlike the voice of the hale and self-confident Davout and reminding one of the voice of a beggar on a Seine bridge. "Your Majesty, during the march from Moscow, Marshal Davout lost all his wagon-trains, two hundred and twenty guns and eleven generals. Your obedient servant has only a few thousand men left."

Marshal Berthier, who stood behind the Emperor, said:

"Your Majesty. . . . The truth must be told. Your Marshals have no more soldiers."

"Pourquoi donc voulez-vous m'ôter mon calme?" said Napoleon.

"Your Majesty . . ." said Berthier timidly.

The Emperor interrupted him. There was no anger in his voice, only sad reproach.

"Why do you wish to deprive me of my calm?" he repeated. "I ask you, why? I need it so much just now."

Silence reigned in the izba.

"Yes, the chief thing is to keep calm," thought Napoleon. "Not to lose one's head, not to give way to despair during these terrible days. Can everything be lost? Is not Europe still before us, with her mild climate, with no barbaric snowstorms and no wild population? Is not beautiful France, and that glorious Paris I did so much to beautify, waiting for us? The chief thing is to reach it, to enter my work-room at the Tuileries once more and begin to give orders. Have not old soldiers been gathered together in model gendarmerie corps? Cannot I proceed to carry out further recruiting? All this dreadful retreat is but an episode in a long campaign, but not the end of it. I must be calm, in order to win in the end. Whoever wins in the end, wins everything."

A page brought out a small camp-stool to the porch of the izba. Napoleon wrapped himself up in a long fur cloak and went out on the porch.

The winter day was fading. The sky was covered with heavy, gray, gloomy clouds. In the west, above the dark line of the forest, a narrow strip of sunset gleamed red. As far as the eye could reach there was snow. Buried in it lay a small village whose fences and barns had been pulled down to feed the wood-fires, and which looked solitary, insignificant and lost in this icy wilderness. Not far from the izba, in their tall bearskin caps and black greatcoats, stood the Grenadier sentries of the Old Guard. Soldiers bustled about, dragging along planks and wooden crosses from the poor little churchyard. . . . Had it not been for the sentry, they would have torn down the very palings that surrounded the izba used by the Emperor.

As silently as shadows, black columns moved over the wide plain, dispersed and broke up into bivouacs. Here and there, the light of wood-fires gleamed. How many dark groups of men there were, and how few fires! About five versts further on, a dark forest began. The sunset glow was fading and a curtain of gray clouds descending behind it.

The Emperor sent an orderly officer to inquire why men had not been sent to the forest for fuel, and why there were so few fires.

The officer went off on foot and did not return for a long time. Night came on and the frost grew more intense The human groups in the bivouacs melted into the dark. Silence reigned there as in a churchyard, and the infrequent gleaming fires, surrounded by a dense mass of people, seemed weird and strange.

At last the orderly officer came back. The snow creaked under his feet.

"Well, what is the matter?"

"Your Majesty, the men are exhausted. . . . They are not able to move. . . . They have had nothing to eat."

Napoleon entered the izba. Wood was crackling in the low, flat stove which looked so queer to a foreign eye. Marshals, A. D. C. Generals, and orderly officers slept in a heap on the floor, filling the vestibule and the neighboring room. The air in the izba was heavy and stifling. The Emperor undressed and lay down. But he did not sleep.

He thought of the morning, when he would drive past forsaken bivouacs and would once more see, as he had seen for some days past, abandoned carts, and near them, groups of men who sat motionless, huddled up against each other—soldiers who had been frozen to death in the night. At first he had sent to have them counted, but there were thousands of them and he had given the order to give up this counting.

Somewhere outside, cries were suddenly heard, and then infrequent shots. . . . Marshals became agitated; adjutants ran to inquire what was the matter. . . . But everything grew quiet once more. It had been a false alarm. In the night, the Chief of the Escort had called loudly to a soldier named Ozannes. Startled out of their sleep, the men had thought that he was crying *"Aux armes!"* [14] and had sprung up. Silence reigned again, the heavy oppressive silence of a Russian winter's night in the snow-covered plain.

The Marshals and generals were already asleep on the floor, huddled up with their heads in their cloaks. It was weirdly quiet in the izba. The Emperor alone was awake. He lay on his camp-bed and waited for the morning. Dawn came at

[14] "To arms!"

last, ominously silent, with no crowing of cocks or barking of dogs, without a single trumpet-call. A murky, dull light filtered into the room through the chinks in the shutters.

Napoleon rose and dressed, and stepping cautiously over the arms and legs of sleepers on the floor, went out onto the porch. Grooms were already harnessing the horses to his carriage in the yard, and the men of the escort were saddling their horses. A smell of toasted bread and coffee came from a little outbuilding. The cooks were preparing breakfast for the Emperor.

The pale gray morning light showed everything to be cold and white—sky, plain and distant background. The road, planted with birch-trees, stretched away towards the west, disappearing in the mist of dawn. Low, bluish smoke still rose from the fires, but there was nobody round them. The Army had already resumed its march. Only the bodies of those who could not follow it, who had deserted during the night into another world, lay like black, motionless sheaves on a field of snow.

After a light breakfast, the Emperor and his retinue also set out.

Napoleon did not enter the carriage at once. He walked for a long time, leaning on his stick. The Marshals and members of his retinue followed him. The squadron of the Guards, in a column of four in each row, moved slowly behind them. The horses slipped on the snow. All marched in silence. Not a word or a joke was heard, only a racking cough here and there. The breeze rustled the bare branches of the birches, seeming to murmur a Russian incantation. A group of soldiers came to sight, sitting under some trees, leaning with their backs to the trunks, their legs stretched forward. The white waxen faces under the shakoes and helmets were lightly covered with hoar-frost, and their glassy eyes were motionless. These men would never run away. . . . Above them, on the bare branches, a flight of black crows had settled. They were silent, with never a croak. . . . They waited, bending their flat heads. The Emperor breathed heavily as he walked past his soldiers. He tried not to see those glassy, motionless eyes and white faces.

He looked straight ahead, in the direction of the west, . . . of the green fields and red roofs of France.

A shiver ran down the Emperor's spine under his warm fur coat. It seemed to him that the dead were following him with their eyes, that in an instant they would cry out:

"Vive l'Empereur!"

At one of the halting-places Napoleon called together his Marshals—Berthier, Béssières, Mortier and Lefèbvre. Looking at the outspread map, he spoke of how they could safely reach Minsk, where the Army would rest, feed, and refit. The Emperor's voice was full of confidence. All was not lost; one had to learn to overcome difficulties.

An adjutant entered the room, reporting that a Polish officer had arrived and begged to be admitted to the Emperor's presence. Napoleon ordered the officer to be shown in and listened to his report.

"Minsk is occupied by the Russians. . . . Their Army entered it on the 4th of November."

Napoleon remained silent for a space. Not a trace of inward emotion betrayed itself on his face. He bent over the map and said calmly:

"Very well. There is nothing left except to rely on our bayonets. Assemble my Old Guard."

When this had been done, the Emperor went out onto the village square. The snow was thawing. A wind blew gustily from the south-east, blowing the skirts of the greatcoats aside. The Guard was drawn up in separate battalions, so small that they might have been taken for companies, had it not been for the order of their formation and the eagles displayed by each battalion.

Silence greeted the Emperor's approach. The Guard presented arms.

Napoleon walked slowly down the line over the snow, his fur coat unfastened. His three-cornered, black felt hat framed his high, white forehead. He walked with a firm, decisive step,

and his face wore a stern expression. The soldiers of the Old Guard felt that, in spite of everything, it was their Emperor who was approaching them.

Napoleon stopped before the middle column, and his voice had a metallic sound as it rang out in the frosty air:

"Grenadiers! We are retreating without having been defeated by the enemy. We have been defeated by ourselves. We must set an example to the Army." He swept the ranks with his glance and frowned. "I see that some of you have thrown away your colors and even your arms. I shall not have recourse to military law to stop this disgrace, but to you—to yourselves! Restore order in your ranks. I entrust your discipline to your own honor."

Silence reigned in the ranks. No shouts of *"Vive l'Empereur"* broke forth in answer to their Emperor's words. In the motionless ranks, the weary faces were gloomy and frowning.

Turning to his Marshals, Napoleon said severely:

"Bring your troops into proper order."

He walked once more down the line, gave the command to stand at the order, and returned to the izba which he used as his quarters.

An officer who had just arrived was waiting for him there. He reported that Marshal Oudinot had defeated the Russians and had occupied Borissov, and that engineer officers sent by him were already inspecting the crossing. A Russian detachment had burnt the bridge. It was impossible to cross near Borissov. Ice was floating on the water and the river was three hundred feet wide.

Napoleon listened coldly to the officer's report. He was still in the excited frame of mind common to him when speaking to his soldiers. The silence of the Old Guard had offended him, and, though outwardly calm, he felt depressed. Was it possible that his star was doomed to extinction in cold and snowy Russia?

A general of the engineers stepped out from the group of officers crowding in the izba. He had just arrived from Marshal Victor's Corps.

"Your Majesty! Our only possible salvation lies in defeating Wittgenstein's army."

Napoleon looked at the speaker and saw, in his mind's eye, the silent ranks of his Grenadiers, their exhausted faces, and the greatcoats which hung on them as on a clothes-horse.

"You think so?" he said curtly and gloomily. "There is only one direction we can take, that which will make us turn our back on the whole world—on Koutouzoff, on Wittgenstein, on Tchitchagoff. . . . Is that clear?"

With his finger on the map, he pointed to a place below Borissov on the Berezina.

"We shall cross the river here."

"Your Majesty, Tchitchagoff with the whole of his Army is on the other bank," said the general of engineers.

"Well, lower down, then."

"Tchitchagoff is there also."

"Well, nearer to the Dnieper."

"That is the land of the Cossacks."

"Ah, yes! . . . ." exclaimed Napoleon. "Poltava is there. You are thinking of Charles XII."

A long, heavy silence ensued. The wind whistled outside the window. At last Napoleon muttered in a barely audible voice, which rendered it difficult to make out the words:

"This is what happens, when one makes one mistake after another. . . ."

Duroc,[15] Daru[16] and Berthier came nearer to the Emperor, in order to hear what he was saying. Napoleon had straightened himself and looked pale but calm.

"Very well," he said. "I shall think things over. You may go, gentlemen."

The short day seemed endless. They had supper and went to bed early. The Emperor lay down on the camp-bed in his small room. Duroc and Daru sat on a bench in the next room, on the other side of a low plank partition. They spoke in whispers of the general position and state of the Army.

"We are in a mouse-trap," said Duroc.

[15] Duroc, Duke of Friuli, Controller of the Imperial Household.
[16] Daru (Count), Minister-Secretary.

"They will declare him a traitor to his country," answered Daru in a low voice.

"What?" came Napoleon's voice from behind the partition. "You think they would dare to do that?"

Daru rose in confusion and went to the door, over which hung a cotton curtain.

"Your Majesty," he said. "Our position is such, that we must be prepared for everything. If we have to surrender to the enemy, we can hardly count on his generosity. You know yourself that there is no place for sentiment in politics."

"But France? . . . What would they say in France?"

"France, Your Majesty? . . . We can make a thousand guesses from here. . . . But none of us can be sure of what will happen there."

Daru was silent for a moment and then went on:

"Ah, if one only had wings! . . . If Your Majesty could fly off to France. From there it would perhaps be possible to save something. But if you remain here, what can you do?"

"Which means, I suppose, that I am not wanted here?" There was a strange ring in the Emperor's voice.

"To say the truth, yes, Your Majesty."

"And you? You do not want to be declared a traitor to your country?"

"It would suffice for me to be a mere prisoner of war," answered Daru, trying to joke.

Silence fell. None felt inclined to joke. Through the curtain, they could hear the bed creak. The Emperor had probably sat up. Then they heard him rise, strike the flint and steel and light the candle.

"Duroc," he said in an anxious voice. "Have you burnt all the reports received from my Ministers?"

"Your Majesty has not yet permitted me to do so."

"Very well. Then burn them now."

After a long silence, Napoleon added dully:

"Our position is extremely bad."

The candle went out and the bed creaked once more.

The Emperor lay down, wrapped himself up in his cloak and blanket, and apparently went to sleep.

Walking cautiously on tip-toe, Duroc and Daru collected the documents. Daru went out to order a great fire to be lit in the open. A thaw had set in. The wind blew gustily from the south, howling under the gates. Beyond the village the wood-fires of the Grande Armée gleamed red. Far away to the east, beyond the dark woods, the whole sky was aflame with a red glow. Koutouzoff's Army was there.

The night before, this glow had been discernible much further away.

At ten in the morning, after breakfast, Napoleon came out on the porch, wearing a short fur coat of Polish cut and dark boots which did not reach as far as the knee. His face, though pale, was calm. Having summoned his Marshals and adjutants, he began to dictate his orders. His voice was firm and imperious. Care and anxiety, and all the doubts of the night before, seemed to have disappeared without leaving a trace. The Emperor's orders were as clear and definite as they had ever been. Marshal Oudinot was to consolidate his position at Borissov and send mounted men to reconnoiter on the right bank of the Berezina. Engineers were to investigate the crossing near Stoudianka, and houses were to be marked out for billeting of the troops. Preparations for the crossing were to be made near a *khoutor*[17] called Vesseloyé, for the purpose of marching on Minsk.

Having finished giving his orders and having dismissed the engineer and orderly officers, Napoleon turned to Berthier. His face, which a moment before had been cold and calm, suddenly became gloomy and anxious once more.

"Order all the regimental colors to be brought to me," he said. "Assemble a battalion of the Guard outside the house where my quarters are. The cavalry of the Guard, which has no horses, must be formed into two battalions. How many men are there?"

"One thousand one hundred, Your Majesty."

"How many horses has Latour-Maubourg left?"

[17] A large farm.

"A hundred and fifty, Your Majesty."

"Let the Generals have those horses and form one squadron. Grouchy and Sebastiani must be in command. It will be my 'Sacred Squadron.' . . . All superfluous wagons must be burnt and the horses given to the artillery. . . . My wagons as well," he added severely. "Report to me when the colors have been collected."

The Emperor went past the Marshals and his retinue onto the porch, stood there for a moment, then descended the steps with his hands behind his back and his head bent, and paced for a long time up and down the yard. Occasionally he went up to the gates and stood looking out. The wide village street with its row of ruined houses, stretched across a highroad planted with birch trees. A tall pine forest began immediately behind the village. All the outskirts of the forest were smoking with wood-fires, bivouacs having been set up there. Here and there dark figures appeared separately coming out of the wood. An officer wrapped in rags stumbled along, holding two fingers to what should have been his headgear. Behind him, like a black shadow, moved a tall standard-bearer, with his regimental colors, dark and torn, waving gently above his head.

One by one, the colors were brought from all sides of the forest outskirts, like a flight of birds alighting together, and took their place in a long row, Murat ranging them in order. Napoleon ordered a large wood-fire to be lighted in the court-yard, and then re-entered the izba.

When yellow reflections and the crackle of flaming wood told the Emperor that the fire was well alight, he sent an adjutant to call a guard, which was to be drawn up in the rear of the fire and opposite the izba. He ordered that the colors be placed right and left of the fire, and that the Marshals enter the yard.

When his orders had severally been obeyed, Napoleon stepped out onto the porch. Ten paces away from him the flames roared, fanned by the wind. Fresh, damp beams and planks burned and crackled gaily, throwing white clouds of smoke and steam upwards, and the snow thawed around the wood-fire, revealing black earth covered with dry burnt grass.

On the other side of this wall of fire and smoke was the deployed battalion, on either side of which stood adjutants and orderly officers holding the colors. Marshals and officers crowded in the courtyard. The Emperor's glance swept gloomily over all as he ordered the battalion to present arms and the drums to beat.

The damp drums began to beat heavily. The noise of the flames and the whistling of the wind drowned the sound. . . .

"Burn the colors," said the Emperor in a flat, expressionless voice.

Maybe his words were unheard or his hearers did not at once grasp the import of this terrible order. Nobody moved.

After a few moments' silence Berthier, Murat, Rapp, Mortier and Ney, detaching themselves from the retinue, went up to the adjutants and repeated the Emperor's order. Murat himself seized the large, heavy colors of the Westphalian Grenadiers and threw them into the very heart of the fire.

One after the other, the colors were inclined and thrown into the flames. The fire burned low for a moment, stifled by the heavy stuff, then flared up more brightly than ever. One could see gold embroidery glow redly, darken, contract, and then go up in flames and smoke. Sparks ran across blackened stuff, as though outlining the words traced thereon. The charred folds held together for a moment, and then turned to ashes. Flames hissed and roared over them, melting the metal eagles and the clamps about the poles.

"The glory of France is burning!" exclaimed one of the adjutants. His face was deathly pale and his eyes deeply sunk in their sockets, were fixed on the fire.

The Emperor turned his head in the direction whence this exclamation came, then he thrust his hands into the pockets of his fur coat and entered the izba without a word.

VI.

BEFORE dawn on the following day, Napoleon, escorted by his Sacred Squadron, drove in a closed carriage to Borissov, to Marshal Oudinot's Corps. Summoning the Marshal into his presence, he ordered the immediate construction of two bridges, one for the artillery and waggon-trains, and one for the infantry's use. Having ordered that the entire army move towards Stoudianka, with Marshal Victor's Corps forming the rear, and that General Partouneaux remain at Borissoff with a brigade of infantry the Emperor drove to Stoudianka, personally to supervise the crossing of the river.

Beams, logs and planks were gathered together near the river, which was only about fifty paces wide at that spot, but flowed rapidly between high banks coated with ice. There was a ford, which was so shallow that Corbineau's Cuirassier Brigade crossed it and returned without any of the horses having had to swim. It appeared that no bridges had begun to be built as yet. Generals of engineers and artillery generals were disputing as to who should have the honor of building them.

The Emperor left the carriage and, leaning on his stick, descended to the very river over the slippery, trampled snow. Its waters rushed along, bearing large hummocks of ice, which collided near the bank with a light crash, broke, and were carried onwards, spinning and turning round. On the opposite bank, beyond a marshy meadow, where withered sedges stuck out of the snow, the dark gray wooden huts of Brili village, about a dozen and a half, stretched out on a low hill. Infrequent shots were heard in that direction, and occasionally a cannon-ball fell with a thud. Some French flankers were keeping up a cross-fire with the troops belonging to General Tchaplitz, which had taken up a strong position on hills above the marshes.

The wind had veered in the morning and was now blowing from the north. Small, hard, dry snow-flakes stung the Em-

peror's face. Napoleon sat down on a heap of wood and spoke to the generals who had come up to him:

"Well, what is the matter, gentlemen? Why are the bridges not being built?"

He was told of the dispute as to who should have the honor of building these bridges.

"Very well," he said. "Let General Eblé build a bridge for the artillery and waggon-trains, and the artillery build one for the infantry."

And so the work was started at last.

The sappers stripped on the bank and entered the water, which was all white from the broken ice, bearing on their shoulders beams taken from houses they had pulled down. Their naked bodies turned red, then white in the water. Here and there, blocks of ice pushed exhausted men off their feet, and the current carried them off. The work made no headway. The beams were not strong enough to construct a bridge. There was no iron for the clamps, there were no nails. General Eblé reported all this to the Emperor.

Napoleon rose from the heap of wood on which he had been sitting.

"Pull wheels off the carts belonging to the wagon-trains. Take the iron hoops, take the nails, but get on with your work. Do you hear, *sacrédieu!* . . . We must have bridges."

Turning his back on Eblé and going up the bank, he added over his shoulders: "Those bridges are indispensable."

Murat followed the Emperor. In red breeches and gold-embroidered uniform, worn over a wadded jacket which made it too tight to fasten, and hat with drooping ostrich feathers, he looked pitiful as he shivered with cold, yet at the same time ridiculous amidst this limitless snow, and the ruined houses of the village.

"Your Majesty," he said to his brother-in-law, "perhaps you would like to inspect the troops of Marshal Oudinot? They are beyond this village."

"Very well," said the Emperor and walked rapidly to the outskirts of the village. Beyond it, in a large field, Marshal Oudinot's troops were drawn up in perfect alignment. They

had suffered a good deal, but still retained their military dress and aspect. Arms had not been thrown away nor colors abandoned.

"Perhaps burning those colors yesterday was a premature thing to do," thought the Emperor involuntarily, as he looked the men over.

A harsh wind blew the skirts of their greatcoats aside. Their boots were torn, but still looked like boots. Buttons were missing on gaiters, but brass chin-straps had been burnished till they shone. The cavalry was mounted, and the Brigade of Chasseurs-à-cheval under General Castex was drawn up behind the infantry. There were not more than two hundred to two hundred and fifty horsemen in each regiment, and only the 23d Regiment of Chasseurs-à-cheval extended in a long line of five squadrons, its five hundred horsemen wearing excellent short fur coats of Russian cut. Marbot, now a colonel at last, rode up to Napoleon at a smart gallop and reported. His whole bearing seemed to say: "Look at my regiment. Admire it."

The Emperor swept the long rows of the squadrons with a keen glance.

"Your regiment makes an excellent show. I thank you, Colonel. Have you enough supplies?"

"I have supplies sufficient to last me for twenty-five days. It is the booty from Tchitchagoff's Army."

"That is very good. I have not as much myself."

Having made the round of his regiments, Napoleon returned to the river and halted near the last houses above the declivity, whence he could watch the building of the bridge.

The camp forges smoked below. One could hear the clink and crash of hammers and axes. Naked men continued to enter the water, dragging heavy beams along and paying no heed to frost and ice. A pile driver had already been set up in the water, and its heavy arm went up on the pulley and fell down with a regular thud, driving in the stakes. The wind made the sparse snowflakes whirl as they fell.

On the opposite bank, the Russians had set up two batteries

and were firing infrequently, but regularly at the French as they worked.

Murat, Mortier, Ney, Rapp and Berthier were crowding at the izba window, looking by turns through a telescope at the enemy on the opposite shore. The Russian troops were augmenting in number, and they were seen to be digging trenches in the snow.

"If the Emperor escapes from danger this time, one cannot fail to believe in his lucky star," said Rapp in a low voice.

All round him kept silence.

Murat rapidly left the izba and went up to Napoleon.

"Your Majesty, may I have a couple of words with you?"

The Emperor turned to him, frowning.

"Well, what is it?"

"Your Majesty," began Murat in a voice broken with emotion. "It is impossible to cross the river. Tchitchagoff's entire Army will gather to fire at us. While there is yet time, we must think of saving Your Majesty's person. I know of two loyal Poles. . . . Under their escort, you can safely cross the Berezina a few miles above Stoudianka and reach Vilna in five days' time. These Poles are loyal, brave, devoted men, who know the roads well. They would answer for your safety with their life."

Napoleon looked at him with a long and sorrowful glance.

"A shameful flight? . . . How can you think for a moment that I would forsake the Army in its danger? I only forgive your suggestion because of your former services, and because I understand the feeling of devotion to myself which prompted it. You may go."

The Emperor went indoors, and remained until evening in that unheated izba. It was already dusk when he got into a closed carriage and drove to the estate of Prince Radziwill at Stary Borissov [18] where his quarters had been made ready for him at the Castle.

[18] Old Borissov.

VII.

OWING to the fact that Prince Radziwill's Castle—or rather hunting-lodge—was not on the highroad along which the armies moved, it had managed to escape destruction. Billet-masters who had been sent on in front, as well as the Prince's land-agent, awaited Napoleon at the Castle. A bright fire was burning in the study prepared for the Emperor, but it could not, however, dissipate at once the wintry cold which filled a room unheated for a long time. A rich supper with wine had been prepared for the Emperor and his retinue, but Napoleon was silent and hardly touched any of the dishes handed round. He rose from table when coffee had been served, and Berthier looked at him questioningly.

"Bring me the map and the compasses. Has anything come in from Paris?"

"Your Majesty knows. . . ."

Berthier did not finish his sentence. He could not bring himself to remind yet once more his Emperor and Commander-in-Chief, that they were surrounded and had long since been cut off from all communication with the outside world.

Napoleon went into his study. An enormous map of Europe, printed on several sheets, was already spread out on the floor. A topographical officer and Napoleon's valet were waiting for him.

"You can go," he said to the officer. Then he turned to his valet.

"Give me my surtout. . . . It is cold. You may go as well. If I want you, I shall ring."

When he was alone, he put the candles on the map which lay on the floor, went on his knees with a supple, easy movement of his stout body, and bent over the map. The skirts of his coat covered Southern Russia, Italy and Spain. The compasses moved rapidly about the black highroad.

"Vilna . . . Warsaw . . . Dresden . . . Paris."

The Emperor stopped, closed his eyes, and became immersed in thought.

Paris rose before his mind's eye in the gray twilight of a rainy day. The wet paving stones, the tall, narrow houses of the Faubourg St. Germain, the turbid yellow waters of the Seine, the Tuileries with their naked chestnut trees and green ivy. . . . His loyal, loving Empress. . . . His little son. . . . And at the Malmaison veiled in its thick damp fog, the woman who had made him happy in the past, who had been like a bright star to him for so many years—the Empress Josephine.

Napoleon rose to his feet, went up to the window and opened the shutters. The weather had cleared up, and it seemed to be freezing very hard. In the silence of the winter's night, the wind whistled persistently. Stars glittered in the dark sky. One of them, ablaze with three double rays reminding him of those of the *Légion d'Honneur,* burned with a vivid and twinkling light. Was it not his star? The snow made it light enough to distinguish the black wall of the surrounding forests. They dipped into a curving ravine, then crept over low hills to the east. There was a stillness as of the grave throughout the house.

Napoleon moved away from the window, then approached it once more and looked long at the star. It burned brightly in the east.

"Whose star is it? . . . Mine? . . . . Or can it be Alexander's?"

The Emperor closed the shutters and began to pace up and down the room. He strode about the map, over Russia, over Siberia, and turned back, thinking: "How enormous this cold Russia is, with her snows! How weird and terrible!" He walked over the Duchy of Warsaw, over Prussia, Bavaria and Spain. At last he took up the candles, folded the map and threw it into a corner. He stopped short and listened. The mute, wintry, snowy silence was oppressive. He took his great gold watch out of his waistcoat pocket, and, as it was dark in the corner of the study, pressed its repeater. The watch struck once and then three times with a clear, tinkling sound. A quarter past two. Napoleon went up to the door and opened

it. A page sprung up from a sofa in the frosty dusk, and one could hear the valet move in the corner.

"We set out at four," said the Emperor.

"Very good, Your Majesty."

The Emperor returned to the study and, standing near the writing-desk, listened for a long time to the sounds heralding the awakening of the Castle. Someone let a boot drop, heavy steps sounded on the stairs. The well-wheel creaked in the yard, horses snorted and the wheels of his carriage grated over the snow.

"No matter," thought the Emperor, "I must risk it. His star is yonder, mine is here. . . . As long as I can escape. . . . We'll see afterwards."

In the dark of night, along a narrow forest path, the Emperor and his retinue returned to Stoudianka. Napoleon entered the same izba, whence he could see the bank occupied by the enemy. It was still steeped in darkness, but the camp-fires gleamed red. Hummocks of ice still floated on the river, but now a tall palisade of beams stuck out above them, driven in by General Eblé's sappers. Planks were being dragged along and at least another eight hours' work was needed in order to finish the bridges. Axes resounded dully in the darkness of the night. Oudinot's army stood to arms. Some of his batteries were set up on the flat, ready to defend the bridges, others on the hillocks beyond the village. Battalions moved in close formation over the field, taking up their position. Mounted men rode in all directions.

A pale dawn was breaking behind the forests. Gray vistas became lighted up straight ahead. Night seemed to withdraw reluctantly. Light appeared in patches, revealing the tall hillocks on the further bank and the low, poor huts of the village. Seizing the window frame with both hands, the Emperor flung it open, so roughly that the rickety thing banged against the beams of the wall. Glass fell with a tinkle. Napoleon stretched his hand out behind his back, and the ready hand of a page put a telescope into it. The Emperor raised it to his eyes. His heart was beating fast, the blood was pulsing at his

temples, and at first he could not see the further bank properly. His hand was trembling in an unusual way.

In the dim morning light, over the slopes of a ravine and along the road which led to Borissov, a long black column could be seen moving slowly. An infantry regiment and twelve guns still remained behind the village, but in their bivouac instead of in position. The guns hung in their limbers and the muskets of the infantry were stacked. One could see Cossack patrols riding on the outskirts of the forest. Napoleon could not believe his eyes. Tchaplitz's rearguard was retiring from Stoudianka, as though to clear the way for him.

Gay voices resounded in the street, outside the izba. Someone was clapping his hands, someone else was crying out joyfully. The door opened wide and Rapp, together with Oudinot, hurried into the room. Their faces, ruddy with the frost, were smiling.

"Your Majesty," said Rapp, "The Russians have raised their camp and abandoned their position."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Napoleon.

Ney and Murat were already entering the izba. From its open door, in the glint of the rising sun, could be seen a horse whose shaggy belly was covered with small icicles sparkling like diamonds. Its rider was a Chasseur-à-cheval, purple of face owing to the frost and tired of mien.

"Your Majesty!" exclaimed Murat. "The Russians are in full retreat. This man has just come in to report it. They raised their camp at dawn and are marching along the highway towards Stakhov and Borissov."

Napoleon went out into the street.

"Did you see it yourself?" he asked the man.

"I saw it myself and a Polish inhabitant told me. During the night the Russians were ordered to proceed to Borissov. They will occupy a position there," said the Chasseur-à-cheval gaily.

The Emperor turned to his Marshals. His face was beaming. His eyes flashed as they had been wont to do.

He snatched off his hat, waved it high above his head and exclaimed:

"I have tricked the Admiral!"

VIII.

THE building of the bridges progressed very slowly. The beams, which were only such as had been taken from destroyed houses, were too short and pieces had to be added to them. The half naked, half frozen sappers in shirts coated with ice, their faces blue with the cold, convulsively clutched the stakes already driven in, whilst nailing cross-beams onto them. Here and there a man would lose hold, fall on the thin coating of ice which covered the river, break through it and disappear in the dark waves. A few were rescued and brought ashore, where, covered with a motley collection of rags, they lay motionless near the wood-fires.

The frost was growing harder. A northerly wind drove away the last clouds from the sky. Blocks of ice had gathered near the bridge, while lower down a light mist curled over the dark water. Two small boats went backwards and forwards beside the bridge, bringing the sappers nails, planks and iron clamps.

On the other side of the river, behind the village Brili, a Russian infantry regiment remained in bivouac without stirring. Cossacks rode to and fro on the outskirts of the forest. The sound of hammers and axes, the shriek of the saws, the noise of falling beams and planks carried far in the frosty air, and now the Russians could not but understand what was going on. They could not fail to see that the fields and forest-outskirts beyond Stoudianka were one mass of waggon-trains, concentrating as a preliminary to the Army crossing. Tchitchagoff might, at any moment, revoke his order and send his troops back.

Napoleon was consumed with impatience. As the day set in bright and sunny, he climbed the river bank and walked up to the village street, where all his Staff officers had assembled and where the Chasseurs-à-cheval were stationed.

"It is time to cross," he said in a voice that shook either from the cold or from emotion. "There is not a moment to

lose. We must throw the infantry back. Whoever is the first to cross the river will add to our Army's laurels."

Jacqueminot, who was Marshal Oudinot's A. D. C., and a Polish count named Prjedecky,[19] mounted and rode down to the river. Blocks of ice were drifting along it in an almost compact mass. . . . Snorting, their horses entered the frosty water and moved forward, pushing the icy mass apart with their chests. . . . The horsemen were already nearing the further bank. Sourdes, who commanded a squadron of the 7th Chasseurs-à-cheval, ordered fifty voltigeurs to mount behind as many of his squadron, whilst other voltigeurs crossed in boats. In this fashion, four hundred men were got over in twenty journeys.

Voltigeurs and Chasseurs-à-cheval gradually assembled on a frozen, marshy meadow amid the gray reeds of a dead year. The sappers were feverishly laying planks down over the bridges. It was almost noon. Thirty French cannon fired without warning at the Russian bivouac, into which whistling cannon-balls burst. Simultaneously, French voltigeurs and fifty Chasseurs-à-cheval appeared from behind concealment of the houses of Brili village, and hurled themselves against the Cossacks.

Legrand's Division with all its artillery rushed to the shaky, as yet unfinished bridge, crossed the river with cries of *"Vive l'Empereur"* and deployed opposite the Russian regiment. The Russians began to retire down the road to Borissov, clearing the way to Zembin.

When the blue French greatcoats appeared on the hillocks near Brili and were seen to approach the forest, Napoleon turned to his Marshals, swept them with a glance which sparkled with joy, and said confidently:

"No, my star has not yet set!"

The sappers were finishing the bridges. The sun was setting behind the forest in the soft frosty twilight, like a large red ball which gave no warmth. The short winter day was fading. At four o'clock in the afternoon, Marshal Oudinot, Duke of Reggio, crossed to the further bank, and after him Dom-

[19] Polish names are spelled as they are in Polish.

brovsky's Division. Seven thousand men were already moving towards Zembin. In the rosy twilight, on foot, leaning on his stick and accompanied by his Sacred Squadron, the Emperor crossed the Berezina. His carriage followed him. He went up the road to Brili, and took up his quarters there. He could hardly credit his own good luck and Tchitchagoff's incomprehensible mistake.

He had scarcely reached the village when one piece of good news after the other came in. A Lithuanian nobleman, disguised as a peasant, arrived from Vilno and reported that Schwarzenberg's troops had defeated Sacken's Division.

"That is probably what frightened Tchitchagoff," thought Napoleon as he listened to him. The Emperor was cold and hungry, but wanted to be in the open air, to be up and doing. The road to Vilno was now free. Scouts reported that Tchaplitz, whilst retreating, had not even destroyed the fascines over the marshes.

Napoleon stepped out onto the porch of the house where he had taken up his temporary abode. The sky beyond the river was enveloped in a blue mist and in it a solitary star shone. Alexander's star? . . . Below, on the bridges, the wheels of waggon-trains and artillery rumbled incessantly and soldiers of the trains were shouting. On the clearings close to the forest, the huge waggon-trains of the Grande Armée formed a single dark patch.

Napoleon gazed at the star in the east and an unpleasant oppressive thought flashed through his mind:

"Tchaplitz has not even destroyed those fascines over the marshes. . . . 'Build a golden bridge for the retreating enemy.' . . . The retreating enemy. . . . *'On ne périt que par la défensive.'* "[20]

[20] "Defence means defeat."

IX.

DURING the whole of that day, which was the 14th of November, Admiral Tchitchagoff remained, as before, at the manor of Shebashevitchy, forty versts distant from the spot where Napoleon was preparing to cross the river. The shabby study of the landowner's house, where the carpets and the sofa smelt of strong tobacco and dogs, was warm and cosy. All the members of the Admiral's Staff were with him. In the evening, candles were lit on the card-tables, and everybody played cards. Fresh arrivals kept coming in, primed with all sorts of rumors and news.

The Admiral, wearing black naval uniform with epaulettes and all his decorations, bent over the map which lay spread out on a table, looking at the Berezina which was painted in blue and meandered capriciously along the map, listened to the different reports, and talked to himself out loud.

The study was full of people. Stout Sabanéeff sat snuffling in an armchair, or lolled about on the sofa. General Berg seemed indifferent and impassive. Touchkoff alone occasionally proffered advice. Young officers whispered in corners. Orderly officers stopped to warm themselves in the Admiral's study. No one sent them away, and so the dinner-table was laid for more and more people each day. With a sailor's hospitality, the Admiral was ready to feed all and sundry.

Tchaplitz reported that, according to orders, he had cleared Zembin and then retired to Bolshoy Stakhov,[21] but that, as he knew by reports made by the Cossacks, Napoleon himself was at Stoudianka, where two bridges were being hastily built out of any material available.

"Believe me, Your Excellency, Bonaparte will cross there and march on Vilna."

"He'll never do that, my dear sir. His objective is Minsk. He is trying to trick us, but I doubt whether he will succeed in doing so. And our Commander-in-Chief himself speaks of

[21] Great Stakhov.

Borissov and a spot lower Borissov. The road from Stoudianka to Zembin, so I am told, lies across a chain of bogs. Napoleon will never be able to get through."

"Has Tchaplitz destroyed those fascines then?"

"I ordered him to do so, but he may have forgotten. He is too restless, but nevertheless a wise, brave and active general. I trust him most of all after Lambert, who has unfortunately been seriously wounded."

Berg, who stood near the window, said:

"The question of the fascine-ways, your Excellency, may be looked upon as unimportant at present. If you will glance out of the window, you will see our men running about over the pond on the ice. The bogs are frozen. If we do not press Napoleon now, in two or three days the Berezina will be frozen over as well, and then he will be able to cross anywhere."

"Well, and am I to blame for that?" exclaimed Tchitchagoff. "Is it my fault if we suddenly have sixteen degrees of frost? His Imperial Majesty worked out the plan for surrounding Napoleon in St. Petersburg. Wittgenstein should join me, in order that we might attack Napoleon together. Koutouzoff should press Napoleon from the rear. There ought to be a hundred and sixty of us acting in concert, instead of which my twenty thousand are the only ones to display any activity. But I cannot be everywhere. I keep watch there where a watch should be kept. If I gave battle to Napoleon's entire Army with my inconsiderable forces, I would be guilty of a crime against His Majesty, instead of carrying out his wishes, as I should most assuredly be defeated. Very well. . . . I shall move my headquarters to Borissov, but I must wait for Wittgenstein even there."

Towards evening, the Admiral moved off to Borissov, and on the 15th of November drove to Stakhoff in a sledge, together with his Chief of Staff. Evgueny accompanied them. It was a very cold day. Firs coated with hoar-frost stood in solemn stillness by the wayside, and wintry, frosty silence was everywhere. The road to Brili, which had a ditch on either side, stretched straight and even through the well-grown timber. The trees grew sparsely and, as the sun filtered through the

branches, the bare places where the snow had thawed and frozen again glittered like gold. The Admiral got out of the sledge and came to a halt on the road, as did Sabanéeff and Evgueny.

"What can I do hereabouts?" he said. "The road is very wide, it is true. I could set up eight, or at the most ten, guns on it. And the enemy could bring up sixty, or even a hundred in the open. The forest is not a dense one, but you cannot march through it in open order or in columns. The enemy will move in chains. . . . The Russian infantry stands firm like a rock if concentrated in one spot, but in an attack in small groups, where each separate man must act independently and adapt himself to local conditions, it hasn't got the initiative and quickness of other Europeon troops, more especially the French, and such super-excellent soldiers as Napoleon's at that."

"But, your Excellency," said Sabanéeff, "question the Lieutenant here once more. How can the French show fight? Just press them a little and they'll surrender to a man, especially in terribly cold weather such as this."

"All right. . . . What would you have me do then?"

"Force all those who have already reached this bank, to re-cross the river."

"Easier said than done. I should have to concentrate all my troops for that, and I am ten versts away from them—whereas Napoleon has only to cross the bridge, a distance of fifty *sajenes*.[22] I shall not stir without Wittgenstein, say what you like."

The Admiral angrily wrapped himself up in his "shouba" [23] and got into the sledge. On arriving to Stakhov, however, he gave the order for all the troops to remove to Borissov and Stakhov, and took up his quarters in an empty and half-destroyed izba above the river. Orderly officers galloped off to see about the Admiral's wagon-train, whilst the Admiral, hungry and cross, sat in the dark izba, dimly lit by a torch.

Night set in, frosty and clear, and all around was silence.

[22] Sajene-7 English feet.
[23] Fur coat.

Suddenly, from no great distance, a single cannon-shot boomed in the north, then another. . . .

Sabanéeff went out of the izba. Above his head glittered the seven stars of the Great Bear.

Quite near, as it seemed, guns were firing with a dull sound from beyond the forest. Flashes of light rose in the sky like flames. Sabanéeff stood listening. From the direction of Borissov, towards the south, guns also spoke. It looked as though a night battle were beginning on the further bank.

He re-entered the izba.

The Admiral sat on a peasant's plank bed, watching a soldier who was trying to light a fire in the broken stove.

"Your Excellency," said Sabanéeff, "it seems as though Count Wittgenstein were pressing the French from the north, while Count Platoff is apparently approaching Borissov from the south."

The Admiral made no reply and did not even change his position. In about five minutes he sent Evgueny to see whether he could get tea and biscuits from one of the regiments quartered in the village.

When Evgueny, who had obtained some cold meat, biscuits and tea from the Cossacks, was returning to the izba, he almost stumbled against a tall man in a Polish fur coat and cap, who rode a Cossack horse and was followed by four Cossacks along the village street.

Although it was quite dark, the stranger recognized Evgueny for an officer and asked, in the imperious tone of a man accustomed to command:

"Where is the Admiral quartered?"

Evgueny offered to accompany him, gave his own name, and asked whom he was to announce.

"Tell the Admiral it is a partisan, Colonel Seslavin, from Count Wittgenstein."

When the Admiral rose from the bed on which he had been sitting and ordered Seslavin to be admitted, the latter was already entering through the low doorway, bending his tall figure to do so.

"I am sent to you, Your Excellency," said Seslavin, "by his Excellency, Count Wittgenstein. The Count intends giving a battle to-morrow at dawn, and told me to ask you what your plans were."

The Admiral did not reply at once. By the light of the torch, Evgueny could see him turn pale. He raised his dark eyes to Seslavin's face and looked at him sharply.

"The tone in which you ask me this question, Colonel, astonishes me very much. Count Wittgenstein apparently considers himself quite independent and intends to act according to his own judgment. This is entirely incomprehensible to me. I can only conclude that, having been late in coming to my help, he now displays petty pride and does not wish to inquire how I will order him to act. I will not, however, deal with this question for the present. Tell the Count that I intend to attack the right bank from Stakhov to-morrow, the 16th of November. I assume the enemy to be four times stronger than I am and ask Count Wittgenstein to attack the French simultaneously with myself, on the left bank. In addition to this, I request him to send me two infantry divisions here without delay."

"Very good. . . . I shall transmit all you tell me exactly."

Colonel Seslavin bowed and left the izba.

Evgueny was bustling about near the stove making tea and preparing the supper. Tchitchagoff dictated his orders, whilst Sabanéeff, bending down beneath the feeble light, wrote them down.

"Passing through the forest in the direction of the high-road," began Tchitchagoff in a dull and weary voice, "General Roudzevitch's right column will attack the enemy's advance posts and throw them back. The left and middle columns of Generals Korniloff and Mestcherinoff are to support General Roudzevitch, advancing in column. . . . The artillery will set up guns in groups of four along the highroad. . . . The Pavlograd Hussar Regiment will cover the artillery. The Livonian and Kinburn Regiments. . . ."

The water boiled in an earthenware pot over the stove. The soldier standing close by whispered to Evgueny:

"Your Honor, will you brew the tea? The water is boiling."

Evgueny thought: "The 14th and 15th of November are over and to-morrow is the 16th of the month. . . . Forty-eight hours; two days and two nights. . . . Napoleon will certainly get away. . . . The war is not over. Why do things turn out so? Is this fate, too?"

X.

It was a moonlit, frosty night. The Emperor Napoleon's and Marshal Oudinot's Headquarters were on the right bank of the Berezina, in the village of Zavniski. The 23d Regiment of Chasseurs-à-cheval was in camp near the village, and Colonel Marbot was riding past their bivouac. He was followed by his adjutant and two old and trusty sergeants. The light of camp-fires mingled with moonlight on the snow.

As he rode by, Marbot asked some soldiers where the cash-box containing the regimental funds was.

A tall, thin officer rose from his seat at a camp-fire, and spoke as though excusing himself:

"I sent the cash-box containing them to the bridge half an hour ago, *mon colonel.* It seemed to me dangerous to send it over the ford, in a pack."

"And did you not remember the congestion on the bridge? It will take quite a day and a night to get through."

"The bridge was empty then, sir. The Imperial Guard crossed it as the moon rose, and after that nobody came along. There is not a sound in that direction."

Marbot listened intently. The glare and the crackle of countless camp-fires came from the direction of Stoudianka, where the bridges were, yet never a wheel creaked over their planking.

"But, according to my own calculation, there should be some fifty thousand *rotisseurs* [24] there!" cried Marbot.

"No fewer than that. And a large number of women and children as well."

"Then why have they not crossed the bridges?"

"I cannot say, *mon colonel.*"

"Follow me, adjutant, and you, Verdier," said Marbot, and galloped down to the river bank. He descended this to the bridges across trampled snow, on which his horse slipped in countless wheel tracks. Pontoon sentries stood close by, near the fires. A few carts, and some isolated infantry Guardsmen, were crossing the bridge. Marbot did likewise without any delay, and made for Stoudianka, which was aglow with camp-fires. Each izba, each cellar and yard, each street corner, were crowded with people. Freshly skinned horses lay about in the road, and the sourish smell of roasting horse-flesh rose from every camp-fire.

It was the first time that Marbot, whose regiment had invariably formed part of the vanguard, had closely approached the remnants of the "Grande Armée" retreating from Moscow, and horror seized him. Near the fires sat old men muffled in rags on which epaulettes and braid were still dangling, cheek by jowl with soldiers, carters, and women. Wherever his glance fell, he saw countless carts drawn by wretched, thin, shaggy horses which no one thought of unharnessing; near the carts burned fires fed with planks, benches and tables taken from a peasant's hut, or green wood. Huddled close to these fires sat creatures with faces so white and bloodless, that not even the frost could nip them into color.

Marbot rode up to the nearest group.

"Hasten to cross the river!" he said in a loud voice. "The bridges are free just at present. Surely you know that the Russians are coming up? You must cross with all speed."

Never a word came in answer. These people continued to sit where they were, happy at having fought their way to a fire,

[24] "Roasters." The remnants of the "Grande Armée," having lost their regimental cooking-pots, individually roasted scraps of dead horse to eat, thus giving rise to the contemptuous nickname.

before which they could stretch and warm their frozen limbs. When a few heads turned at Marbot's words, their dim eyes held such an expression of exhausted indifference as made him shudder. It was obvious that the poor wretches had reached the limit of human endurance. Neither death, nor cold, nor France, nor the menace of the half frozen river, mattered one whit. The wish to live had left them.

"*Que diable!*" thought Marbot; "this cannot be allowed. . . . They must be compelled to cross in good order, whilst there is yet time. With the help of an adjutant or so, and a fresh battalion from Oudinot's Corps, they could be brought over to our bank in forty-eight hours."

Marbot rode back to Zavniski at all speed. He sought out a general belonging to the Emperor's Headquarters, and reported what he had seen on the opposite bank.

"Yes, yes," said the general inattentively. "Of course, of course! Their crossing should be organized. . . . But there are no troops at liberty for the purpose at the Emperor's Headquarters. Whom could we send back, when all are so weary? Perhaps your own Staff could take the matter up?"

Marbot reported, to Oudinot's Chief of Staff, the state of affairs on the left bank of the Berezina.

"My dear Marbot," said this officer, "what have we to do with the remnants of the 'Grande Armée?' There are people at the head of it."

"But, with the help of a few adjutants and about three hundred men, some tens of thousands could be saved. If the Cossacks turn up, all are doomed!"

"War is war," said the Chief of Staff with a shrug of the shoulders. Turning away, he began to re-arrange with great care the pillows on his bed in the warm izba, making it plain that Marbot was preventing him from retiring for the night.

When Marbot was returning to his own regiment, he had the impression that the wretches on the further bank—those luckless, unarmed, half frozen "rotisseurs"—were, as a matter of fact, a burden to everybody. It might even be that Emperor and Marshals were glad to be rid of many thousands who

would only crowd the hospitals, and subsequently impart to re-formed battalions unnerving tales of past horrors.

"But they are French, all the same," thought Marbot. He had already decided to take two of his own squadrons personally to Stoudianka, when, on approaching the regiment, he saw it drawn up in column. All fires had been extinguished and the senior Captain reported that orders had just been received to make for Stakhov, there to disperse the Russian flankers who were seriously harrassing French outposts.

There was nothing to be done, therefore, and Marbot began to give the necessary orders. "But those poor creatures will perish," came into his mind. Then this thought was expelled by another: "What, after all, have I, the Colonel of the 23d Chasseurs-à-cheval, to do with all that?"

And he thought no more of the doomed remnants of the "Grande Armée."

At about ten o'clock that night, a feeble, almost smothered cry rose from one of the furthest carts standing in the neighborhood of outposts of Marshal Victor's rear-guard Corps:

"The Cossacks! The Cossacks!"

A woman, with a crying baby in her arms, ran across the snowy field among the carts, and, on reaching Stoudianka, fell down in the road—perhaps from fear, perhaps from weariness. Or perhaps death smote her. Nobody came nigh, and the baby which had fallen from her grasp went on wailing. Then it too lay still.

In the lee of carts and of ruined fences, people still sat motionless around their fires. Some ten minutes went by.

About a verst and a half away from the village, in the utter darkness beyond the glare of fires, sounded a couple of musket shots, then silence fell once more. But now that silence seemed menacing, as though it hid and sheltered many creeping shadows.

Here and there, people moved about the fires. They crept out from under ragged shelters and, tightening straps, settling

yokes, clambered into their carts. But all was quiet as yet among that huge camp of wagon-trains.

On the borders of a thicket four yellowish flames spurted suddenly, to be followed by four thunderous, awe-inspiring cannon-shots, which re-echoed from wood to wood in the night. With a rumble and a shriek four cannon-balls sped through the air, to fall at last in a field near Stoudianka. There came a rattle of musketry fire, and through the forest rang the prolonged, howling, mournful Cossack whoop.

At once the huge mass of carts and humans started into life, heading for Stoudianka in rows of three or four across the road. Horses were whipped up with reins, sticks, whips, or anything that came handy, and the whole amorphous, disorderly stream moved helter-skelter towards the bridges. In a twinkling, sentries were brushed aside and fires trampled underfoot. Even as a river, momentarily dammed, overflows all obstacles and spreads into a lake, so did the endless stream of carts flow and widen about the bridges. Then the carts straggled forward, and fled across the river in an uninterrupted file. And from all sides, from the rear, straight across the fields, among the houses, along steep declivities where orchard hedges still thrust through the deep snow, some of them tumbling or rolling over, fled more and more carts. In between and among them ran people mad with fear.

The river stopped them. Covered with smooth, newly formed ice, it glittered beneath the moon like some silvery ribbon. A strong wind blew about its waters, fluttering the ragged clothing of those who crowded near its banks. They could not make up their minds to trust themselves upon the ice. There was no immediate danger yet, and so they waited, watching the many carts and the occasional pedestrians streaming across the bridges.

The moon rode high above the river, veiled in a light, transparent cloud, then clearly outlined against the velvety blue of the night, it shone gently on woods in their shroud of white, on a hushed and wintry world.

The rattle and boom of musketry and cannonade grew frequent, echoing along the river banks. Forced forward by the

press in their rear, carts began to cross the bridge by twos and threes. The frail parapet was rent asunder with a crash of splintering wood, and the carts fell through onto the ice. It cracked under their heavy weight and the river, freed from its icy chains, sucked men and beasts under black, smoking waters, until, choked with their numbers, it rolled over them in a dark flood, deluging and breaking the ice below the bridge.

At dawn, Victor's rear-guard Corps reached the river, pursued by General Yermoloff and Ataman Count Platoff. As it was imperative to retreat, a Grenadier battalion was ordered to clear the approaches to the bridges. Muskets spoke with a dull roar. . . . Grenadiers pushed and hurled off the bridges, and into the river, those carts and horses which still encumbered them, and whoever might be still in the carts. Victor's Infantry crossed in haste, without waiting for Partouneaux's Infantry Division, which had lingered and been delayed at Borissov.

Now came Dendel's 26th Infantry Division, Baden regiments of the line under Count Jochberg, some Baden Chasseurs, and the Berg regiments. They had all been stationed in Prussia up to the end of September, knew nothing of the "Grande Armée" retreating from Moscow, and there was no tie or affinity between these strangers and Napoleon's soldiers, to whom they ascribed the rout and non-success of the whole campaign. There was no pity, no mercy in them now. Saxons and Westphalians of Gerard's 2d Infantry Division, Delettre's and Fournier's German Cavalry, all regarded with contempt this huddle of Frenchmen who had lost all semblance to an army, whom cold and hunger had reduced to the level of beasts. In the opinion of the newcomers, these *rotisseurs,* as they called the remnants of the Army, these marauders, deserved no compassion.

Close on their heels pressed the Russian Army. The adjacent woods were shrouded, at their outskirts, with white clouds reeking of gunpowder. Russian cannon-balls poured among the enemy's rearguard, starting that anxious haste which precedes a panic. The roar of cannon was also heard to their front, on the right bank of the Berezina, and all sorts of rumors

constrained the French Marshal to hurry. At Stakhov, the Russians under General Tchaplitz were pressing Oudinot more and more. Partouneaux's Division had been entirely surrounded at Borissov, and had surrendered. In these circumstances, iron courage and an inordinate readiness to die for one's neighbor were necessary, if one intended to wait till this disorderly mass of carts and wagons could make shift to cross the bridges. Forty-eight hours of stubborn fighting, in all directions and in this bitter cold, would be requisite for the purpose, to say nothing of steadiness, resolution, and a strong sense of duty towards one's neighbor. These virtues existed no longer in an army held together solely by the magic of its leader's name, by faith in his star. And now that leader had gone on ahead. He was no more in their midst. No longer, as had been his wont, was he where responsibility and danger were greatest. His star had suffered eclipse. So one had to think of oneself, of means to save one's own skin.

German regiments descended the slopes to the river in a multi-colored crowd, with a murmur of many voices. Thin ice covered the water in uneven layers, which snow drifting from the banks patterned with white. Near the bridges and under them, the river smoked with the cold. Waggons and carts were crossing the insecure, shaky bridges; in their multitude they waited on the slope leading to them, or crowded in the village street of Stoudianka. Resistlessly, stubbornly, drawn by exhausted, shaggy and ungroomed horses, and so incongruous to the eye amid a martial assembly, they streamed towards the bridges, bearing their excessive freight of human beings, goods and ragged gear.

"Halt! Can't you see troops are coming up? Drive no further," came the cry.

Nobody paid any heed. Silently and persistently, cart followed cart so closely, that the heads of horses rested on the tail-board of carts preceding theirs. It was impossible to hope that this stream would ever end.

In his warm German fur coat and cap, surrounded by a convoy of Baden Hussars, Marshal Victor rode up to the bridges. For some time he remained motionless, gazing with

a frown at the thin, exasperated faces of those who sat or lay in the carts. He seemed to be weighing some point mentally. Round the stream of wagons and carts crowded his regiments. The men did not sit down on the frozen ground, but silently stamped where they stood whilst waiting. To the rear, the cannon frequently spoke, firing at the village, and each time their boom and the bursting of a cannon-ball made themselves heard, a collective shudder seemed to animate the unwieldly mass of carts.

A cart was driven past the Marshal. In it sat a woman and three children; beside it hurriedly stepped an old man—whether soldier or civilian, Frenchman or Pole, it was impossible to say. Victor looked first at them, then at his rather ragged, but still martial troops, took counsel with himself an instant, and turned towards the Hussars.

"Clear the bridges!" he said firmly. "And set them on fire as soon as our troops have crossed."

A red-whiskered German on a lean horse spurred forward, the Hussars following in his wake. There was a short, sharp fight, and a few carts were flung off the bridges. A gap appeared in the otherwise unbroken file of carts. A living stream of Saxon Infantry was already flowing over the bridges, driving along the carts preceding them. Marshal Victor rode after his infantry.

Those left behind in the endless procession of wagons and carts, stood up to watch the troops marching rapidly over the bridges; they saw the glint of their bayonets in the sun, the guns that crawled between, hung low from long green limbers dulled with frost.

Some twenty-five thousand men and their carts were still in Stoudianka when bright serpents of fire ran along twists and plaits of straw flung on the bridges. The old, dry wood caught light at once.

None of those so abandoned raised his voice. The struggle against cold, weariness, and hunger, had so exhausted them, as to obscure the full significance of what had happened. This prolonged torpor was shattered by a terrified shout at their rear:

"The Cossacks!"

At the sound all came to life, moved, advanced, cried out, lamented, groaned, and hurled themselves, by the thousand, either onto the blazing bridge or straight onto the thin, glassy surface of the ice so daintily patterned with snow. The ice splintered and broke. The dark river swallowed up carts and humans; its waters smoked above them.

Along the bank, Cossacks and Bashkirs rushed up and down. They drove prisoners into yards, dragged carts this way and that, and hastily rummaged among their contents.

The still wintry day was drawing to its close.

When the late moon rose, fog wreathed about the river. Ice crackled more loudly, now freezing anew after disturbance by human agency. Along the blackened piles of the burnt bridges, all gleaming with frost, overturned carts and the bodies of horses thrust to the surface; stiff white hands and arms, weird and immoveable, fenced them about. A mounted Cuirassier, caught among the waggons, had frozen into an icy statue. His wet greatcoat had turned into a thing of lead; his white, frozen face glittered in the moonlight, and only the wind, playing with the horsehair plume on his helmet, gave to his stern and threatening rigidity a semblance of life.

Calm settled on the river as its ice thickened. Hoar-frost and rime blotted out the color of uniforms, powdering everything with a coat of white.

A Russian winter shrouded the tomb of the "Grande Armée."

XI.

ALTHOUGH it had been so arranged between Seslavin and Tchitchagoff, Count Wittgenstein's troops could not arrive to Stakhov by dawn. Their road was too much encumbered with French waggons and French corpses.

Evgueny Ogloblin was ordered by the Admiral to take a

company of the Yakoutsk Infantry Regiment to Stoudianka, so as to clear the road for Wittgenstein. A squadron of the 3d Ural Cossacks was to accompany them, in order to induce peasants hiding in the adjacent woods to bury the dead.

Evgueny entered the village of Brili at dawn on the 17th of November. It was empty. The small izbas, with their smashed window-panes and broken or burnt fences, looked as though they held not a single inhabitant. Blue-white in the frozen stillness, the river seemed to drowse below the village. On its further bank, the beams of the rising sun emerged in a golden flood from behind the roofs of Stoudianka.

The ice had grown thicker during the night, so much so that Evgueny's men were able to cross the river on it. He went with them, striving to avoid, as much as possible, the awesome palisade of human arms and hands which rose above the ice. But there were bodies everywhere, and dead men, given a still more dreadful aspect by the greenish hue of river water, were visible under a transparent glaze of thin ice.

Silence fell on the Russian soldiers. They doffed their shakoes and crossed themselves as they went over the ice.

There were even more ghastly sights in Stoudianka. Dead bodies lay everywhere—bodies stripped half naked, terrible in their rigid calm, huddled among overturned carts, in yards, or in the very street.

Evgueny gave the order for the road to be cleared, and for the corpses to be laid aside in heaps. Then, taking a sergeant and some soldiers with him, he went through the village towards the woods. He was met by a crowd of peasants, whom Cossacks escorted. He gave the order that these peasants should scatter, for their task, along the Borissov road. Fires could be seen burning near the borders of the wood, which sheltered part of Wittgenstein's advance-guard.

It was freezing hard. A strong wind blew from the north, and Evgueny shivered in his thin cloak.

"Won't you come into the shed, Your Honor?" said the sergeant. "We'll light you a fire out of the wind, and you can get warm."

A tall gray barn stood aside from the road. Its wide gates

seemed blocked with something from within, so much so that the sergeant and his men had some trouble in opening them. Then the light of day flooded the dark shed.

On its clean threshing-floor, round the ashes of a fire long spent, lay or sat fifteen Frenchmen. All were dead. Some lying, some sitting, they had frozen stiff in the attitudes in which the sleep of deathly cold had overcome them. With dead white faces and dead white hands, dressed in bright and variegated colors, they appeared to Evgueny like the puppets of a waxwork show.

A young woman lay on a long trunk of leather, which was covered with ragged woollen stuff. She wore a thin silk dress and a short coat of ermine. Her abundant black hair had come undone, and swept the floor in a motionless wave, yet on her forehead two little tendrils still curled. Her wide open, glassy eyes seemed to stare fixedly at Evgueny, but their sombre depths were veiled by a dull film.

Evgueny stepped quickly forward and fell on his knees.

The dead, indifferent eyes were the eyes whose light had acted on him like wine; the thin face with its sharpened features and delicately aquiline nose, was the face he had so often passionately kissed. The small hands and pretty fingers he had loved hung helplessly down, piteous to behold.

Before him lay Germaine Réville, surrounded by officers of the French General Staff.

Evgueny took out his flask of rum, and with difficulty forced open the white frozen lips. Before his eyes gleamed small white teeth, the same teeth whose cool freshness had erstwhile thrilled him between kisses. With trembling hands Evgueny poured the spirit into the dead mouth, in the desperate hope of bringing the girl back to life. It trickled along her clenched teeth, then dripped down on her fur coat.

"It's useless, your Honor," said the sergeant. "She's been dead a good while, that's plain."

"A good while, eh?" asked Evgueny. His agitation was such that he could not hear his own voice.

"Been dead two days, I should say. See! her nails have turned quite blue."

He put up his flask and rose. The opened lips before him did not resume their previous fold, but seemed to take on an imploring and pitiful smile.

Still keeping his eyes on Germaine, Evgueny walked over to a corner of the shed. Soldiers and peasants together began to carry out the dead. Some of them approached Germaine, and lifted her up by the shoulders and legs. The little hands, frozen stiff, stuck piteously out; her long black hair swept the ground. . . . Surely there was something else he ought to do?

"Where are you taking her?" he asked.

"Where? Why—where we're taking them all, of course."

"To be buried?"

"There's no doing that now," said the peasant who held Germaine's shoulders. "The ground's too hard even for a pick-axe. If there's no order to burn them, she'll have to lie unburied till spring—if so be the wolves don't get at her, or she don't rot."

The man's words, but hardly their import, reached Evgueny's brain. He stared dully at the disappearing bearers, until the back of Germaine's pretty head had vanished through the gates of the shed. His soul seemed strangely, dreadfully empty. It held neither anger, forgiveness, nor love.

Evgueny rode back over the Berezina that moonlit night, tormented by fear and cold. The frost tortured his feet and hands. Although he thrust his fingers into the horse's mane and kept moving his legs about, it was impossible to get rid of the dreadful pain.

"How she must have suffered," thought Evgueny, "when the cold crept over her from head to foot!"

And suddenly, irresistibly, a wave of utter indifference towards everything on earth flooded his being. It was as though a deep wound was bleeding in his heart, as though the love of life, the will to live, were slowly flowing from that wound together with his blood.

Evgueny thought of his three and twenty years, which had known no other love save this one—so strangely begun, so terribly ended—and his soul was filled with a cold, indifferent, unrelievable, and crushing weariness of spirit.

XII.

On the 23d of November, the Emperor Napoleon left the Army at Oshmiany. The rattle and roar of musketry fire and cannonade had made itself heard towards evening, when the sun was setting, darkly red, behind the snowy woods, and the melancholy of a winter's night arose in the frosty air. Seslavin's partisans attacked the Imperial Headquarters, and Loison's hastily dispatched Division beat them off. The sun set, darkness fell, and camp-fires began to glimmer redly in the woods to the left of the Warsaw highroad. Colonel Seslavin bivouacked in view of the French Army, watching for Napoleon. At Headquarters, Marshal Berthier, Prince de Neufchatel and Napoleon's Chief of Staff, occupied these cold and threatening hours in making hasty arrangements for Caulaincourt, Duc de Vicence, to post to Paris in company with his secretary, Monsieur de Renneval, and a Polish interpreter named Wonsovicz. A small closed travelling-sledge, drawn by a single pair of horses, waited the travellers in front of the house used as Headquarters. A second sledge was drawn behind the first. Into it the Mameluke Roustam and Constant, the Emperor's valet, were packing things. A mounted Polish "piqueur" was ready to show the way.

It was the Emperor himself who was to travel under the name of Monsieur de Renneval.

At 9 o'clock that night a short, plump man, well wrapped up in furs, descended the steps of the porch. A round cap of beaver was drawn low on his brow; his fur-lined coat of green cloth, ornamented with gold frogs, fell below the knee. Over the small boots he usually wore were drawn high ones lined with fur. He was accompanied by a tall man who looked enormous in his fur cap and coat, and by a slender Pole wearing pistols and sabre. Marshal Berthier stepped out on the porch, his adjutant following with a lighted candle. The night was frosty, calm and moonless. Stars twinkled brightly in a dark sky. Snow gleamed underfoot.

"Au revoir, my dear Berthier," said the man in the green coat. "Au revoir! I do not know exactly where we shall meet again; on the Oder, perhaps, but on the Elbe in any event. I rely absolutely on you until the King of Naples arrives. Tell Murat that he must remain in Vilno without fail, for a week at least. It is absolutely necessary that the Army be re-fitted and the men set up both morally and physically. Tell him as well that such are my instructions, and I hope they will be carried out."

He approached the foremost sledge, which was surmounted by the body of a coach, and laid a hand on its door, then turned round again.

"I rely on you, Berthier," he said. "I trust that you will help the King of Naples to give the retreat another complexion. Tell him that the Army's salvation depends on this. Tell him that I rely on him."

He got into the sledge and sat down.

"It does not often happen," he said jestingly, "that a secretary enters a carriage before his employer. Take your seat, Caulaincourt."

The tall man squeezed into a half-lying position beside the man in the green coat. The Polish officer climbed onto the driver's seat, next to the White Russian peasant who sat there. Holding his carabine across his knee, the Polish "piqueur" slid out of the gates at a noiseless trot, followed by the two sledges in single file.

The little village was soon left behind, but the travellers were stopped on approaching the bivouac. A surly officer, who wore a shawl over his shako, examined their papers and ordered the guard to let them through.

Now the Duc de Vicence could proceed on his way to Paris without let or hindrance, accompanied by his secretary Monsieur de Renneval, his interpreter, and two servants. The Duke sat up in his seat; the secretary lay back, wrapped in a wolfskin travelling rug. In all probability he felt cold, or the jolting of the sledge on the ruts of the road made him feel uncomfortable.

After this momentary delay the horses' pace was swift, and

soon the travellers entered a thick forest whose tall trees were laden with snow.

Neither the Emperor nor Caulaincourt broke the silence. Napoleon felt troubled and uneasy in spirit.

Memory took him many years back, to the night—not frosty, but terrifically hot, with the blue waves of the sea beating against the shore—when he had abandoned his Egyptian Army, leaving her fate in Kleber's hands. Then, just as was happening now, events of the greatest importance recalled him to France. And what had happened? His intuition, his star, had not deceived him. He had arrived in time to put an end to revolution and begin creative work. And now, likewise, he must hasten; he must arrive in Paris earlier than any rumor as to the fate of the "Grande Armée" reached it. He was the Emperor. In his person he represented, he concentrated the creative genius of his nation; on his salvation depended that of France, together with the continuance and strength of her coalition with other nations.

Even as danger had surrounded him then at sea on the Mediterranean, with English ships watching for him on every side, so might Cossacks or partisans take him prisoner to-day at any moment. But danger had a way of soothing, not frightening Napoleon. Now it justified this flight in his own eyes, and each time he called it to mind, silenced the stubborn and bitter thought that it was shameful for a leader to forsake his army in such peril.

A few hours after Napoleon's departure, Duroc and Count Lobau [25] left Smorgoni in the same way. In their wake came a coach in which were seated two secretaries, Baclet d'Albe the geographer, and Yvon, the Emperor's body physician. The Minister for Foreign Affairs [26] and Count Daru left in the early morning. It was only then that the highway guard, and later on the troops, heard speculations and rumors about the Emperor having abandoned the Army.

Some were moved to anger and indignation and called the Emperor a deserter; others defended his action, saying that

[25] General Mouton, A. D. C. of the Emperor Napoleon.
[26] Maret-Duc de Bassano.

the Army was in such a state as made fighting impossible anyhow, and that a new army must be created. But there was little time for discussions and censure. The most important thing, for each and all, was the problem of how to get out of this cold, accursed country without delay.

XIII.

NAPOLEON travelled with extraordinary speed, changing horses constantly. In Vilno he ordered the Duke of Bassano to come to the sledge door, there confirming all the instructions given to Marshal Berthier in regard to making the Army halt at Vilna, and in regard to fitting it out afresh.

Whilst horses were being changed at Koutno, and later on at Mariampol, the Emperor kept writing dispatches and sending them off in all directions.

The sledges reached Warsaw at about noon on the 26th of November, one of them drawing up before the house of the French Ambassador, who was the Abbé de Pradt. Caulaincourt got out of it. As it was half an hour after noon, de Pradt had only just finished his midday-meal when an enormously tall man entered his dining-room, leaning on the shoulder of one of the Embassy secretaries. This tall man was swaddled in furs, and walked with difficulty in his heavy felt boots, worn over an ordinary pair reaching to the knee. The Abbé jumped up from his seat at the table, and stood looking in surprise at the newcomer. The latter loosened his scarf, and de Pradt recognized him.

"It is you, Caulaincourt?" he exclaimed. "And where is the Emperor?"

"The Emperor is at the 'Hotel d'Angleterre.' Let us go, he awaits you."

Several wooden sledges, of the plainest construction, stood in the yard of the Hotel d'Angleterre and one of them was surmounted by the much battered body of a coach. The Abbé de Pradt stepped into the vestibule of the hotel and mounted

the stairs. Roustam came forward to meet him in a small, low room and led him into the Emperor's presence without delay. Napoleon, who had not taken off his fur-lined coat, was walking up and down the room with a quick step. He came to a halt opposite de Pradt, and, after greetings, gave instructions for Stanislas Potocky and the Finance Minister to report at the hotel after dinner. Their audience only lasted a few minutes, during which the Emperor spoke encouraging words. Then he walked down the stairs, got into his closed sledge, and was whirled away from Warsaw as rapidly and unexpectedly as he had entered it.

Notwithstanding the fatigue of this rapid journey, the Emperor continued to give his attention to matters of business. That small, stabbing pain below the heart, which had first made itself felt when the Niemen was crossed, now gave him no respite. But by an effort of the will he forced himself to forget it. He felt that he must act and look forward—not back. He believed in France, he built his hopes on France. But by reason of his own policy, the fate of France was interwoven with that of all Europeon nations, and he knew that it must be his task to make all these nations view the retreat from Russia with his eyes, as he wished it.

Four days after leaving Warsaw, on halting for half an hour at Dresden, Napoleon wrote a letter to the Emperor of Austria. It began with the salutation of: *"Monsieur mon frère et très cher beau-père."* [27]

In this letter, Napoleon informed the Austrian Emperor that he had left the Army and had handed over the command of it to the King of Naples, with the Prince de Neufchatel as Chief of Staff. Further, he asked for a fresh Army Corps to be sent to Galicia and Transylvania, so as to raise the number of troops there to sixty thousand men. He expressed the hope that Austria would aid him and ended with assurances of his friendship towards that country and her Emperor.

Napoleon wrote these words, and yet all the while disagreeable and depressing thoughts came involuntarily into his head.

"On what are this hope and this friendship founded? On

[27] "Dear brother and father-in-law."

memories of Austerlitz and Jena, of Wagram and Vienna? On the blood shed by Austrians who have fought the French for about fifteen years? On the fact that the youthful Princess Marie-Louise married an obscure Corsican captain of artillery—a *mésalliance* which shocked the Hapsburg Court so deeply? Take away the glory of my victories, of all my conquests over Europe, and what remains? Who will side with me, now that the flames of Moscow have shown me as I am?"

Again there came the well known, needle-like, stab of pain near his heart. . . . But he had no time to think of it. And he thanked God there was no time.

The snow ended at Erfurt, so the travelling sledge—which had almost fallen to pieces—was left behind, its place being taken by an ordinary post chaise. And still it was not the Emperor who rode in it, but Caulaincourt with his secretary de Renneval.

On the 6th of December, after a journey of thirteen days, the yellow lights of Paris began to shine in the distance. The heavy iron wheels rumbled over the cobblestones of the pavements, the narrow streets of the *banlieue* [28] flew by, and, through the mists that veiled the city, the huge Place de la Concorde showed grim in its long bordering chain of oil-fed lanterns and its frame of bare, black chestnut and lime trees. It was easy to imagine the shades of the executed King and Queen wandering in its uncertain gloom. But the lanterns burned more brightly at the entrance of the Palace of the Tuileries, where lights showed in the lower windows, splashing the wet cobblestones of the pavement outside with brilliant patches. After a long explanation had been given to the officer of the guard, the latter allowed the chaise of the Duc de Vicence to enter the courtyard, a valet of the Palace recognized Roustam, and, after a whispered colloquy with him, flung its glass doors wide open. The galloper on duty ran to light candles.

"Thank you, Caulaincourt," said Napoleon. "Take up your quarters as usual. Good-bye till to-morrow . . . to-morrow at nine."

[28] Suburb.

Still wearing his high Russian cap and short, fur-lined green coat, the Emperor entered the bed-chamber of the Empress.

Marie-Louise had just dismissed her chamber-maid, and, after putting out the taper, had curled herself up in the warm blanket. A wood-fire was still burning in the open hearth. The imperial sleeping-apartment seemed swathed in the deathly stillness of the wintry night, the cold of which was kept out by the drawn curtains at its enormous windows. Suddenly the unaccustomed sounds of loud voices became audible from adjacent rooms, and the Empress jumped out of bed in affright. She sat up on it, pressing one hand to her heart. She knew that the Emperor was on the way, but had not anticipated so speedy a return. The tall, bronze encrusted door was flung open, and through it stepped the chamber-maid with a branched candlestick which Roustam had handed to her. Behind the woman came the Emperor, almost unrecognizable in his green, fur-lined coat.

Marie-Louise ran along the carpet in her little bare feet, flung her scented arms wide, and, throwing them round Napoleon's neck, pressed a hot cheek to one which the wind of the journey had chilled.

The maid set the candlestick in front of the mirror above the mantlepiece, and retired noiselessly.

Roustam closed the door. After having been separated for seven months, the Emperor and the Empress were alone.

All was still outside, save for the drip of moisture falling from naked chestnut-trees onto the wet sand of the Palace garden. Paris was soundly and quietly asleep. As yet, Paris was unaware of its Emperor's return.

XIV.

At nine the next morning, the Emperor walked into his reception room, where all the officers of the Palace Guard awaited him. The Emperor wore uniform, white buckskins and knee boots, and all his orders and decorations. His face was pale

and tired looking. He went slowly past the long row of officers and Court officials, glancing into their familiar faces, and stopped on reaching Monsieur de Beauveau. He remembered that this man's son, a mere youth, had been through the campaign with the "Grande Armée" and had been wounded.

"Your son bore himself gallantly," said Napoleon to the statesman. "He has added luster to your name. He has been wounded, but not dangerously. He should be proud, for he has spilt his blood in defence of his country."

The Emperor gave a sigh, and made for the tall door of his work-room, where there was much to be done. A wood-fire burned brightly on the hearth, his travelling portfolio lay in its place, documents and blank forms were set out in due order. A secretary stood at a small table, on which were lighted candles. Everything necessary for preparing packets—such as sealing-wax, seals, and envelopes—lay ready to hand.

General Clarke—Duc de Feltre and War Minister, Monsieur Lacuée, Count de Sessac, who was a member of the Military Council, General de Gassendi, and the Chief of Artillery, awaited the Emperor. Questions of internal policy had to be discussed, in addition to those concerning the creation of a fresh army and a fresh plan of operations.

During the Emperor's absence, a plot had been discovered in Paris in October. A retired general named Mallet—little known by name, but enterprizing by nature—was at the head of it. The plotters had spread the news that the Emperor had been killed near Moscow the month before, their aim being to introduce a republican form of government. For a short space of time, a hair-breadth had separated France from a fresh upheavel. But Mallet's plot had been discovered almost at its inception and the conspirators had been arrested. Yet the glaring fact remained. Had the Emperor really been killed, France might have become the plaything of political parties and casual adventurers, and might well have perished.

Setting all his mental faculties to work, Napoleon told himself that such an eventuality could only be avoided in one way —that of returning to the ancient and wise formula known to

France as a Kingdom: *"Le Roi est mort, Vive le Roi!"* [29] He would crown Marie-Louise as Empress and proclaim the little King of Rome heir to the throne, the Empress to become Regent if he himself should die during his son's minority. This was the only way to guarantee the succession to the throne and prevent the possibility of disturbance in the event of his death. All this called for preliminaries in the Senate, discussions with statesmen, and the pondering and drafting of the necessary legal enactments. In a word, it called for work.

The day after his arrival, with a face still glowing from the sting of the wind on his journey, with ears still ringing with the sound of wheels and whip, Napoleon worked on until two in the morning, setting military and civilian affairs in order, preparing France for further military efforts

On the following day, which was a Sunday, the Emperor ordered the foremost statesmen of the Empire to assemble in the huge halls of the Tuileries Palace. A dispatch concerning the battle of Molodetchno had only reached the capital 24 hours before, and it was then that the Parisians heard of the retreat of the "Grande Armée."

Now dropping to a whisper, now rising in a continuous buzzing roar, lively conversation was maintained among the long ranks of officials in their dark-blue, crimson, or black, gold or silver-embroidered frock-coats, among paunchy generals of the rear in uniforms of fine cloth decked with glittering epaulettes, among ministers and deputies, among senators and prelates.

Limping with his left foot, the Marquis de Choisy went from group to group, reading to the senior statesmen in a low and confidential whisper, a letter addressed to himself, in which mention was made of Louis XVIII.

"We have no means of knowing, you see," he said, "what is in the mind of His Imperial Majesty, nor why he has come. He returned so unexpectedly. . . . To all appearances, he must have fled—my son writes quite plainly that all is lost! And it must be confessed that the lawful heir to the throne—the lawful heir, you take me? . . . well, England is in his

[29] "The king is dead. Long live the king!"

favor. . . . And this would seem to foreshadow a long and solid peace. We cannot, of course, make war any longer. France has already made her ultimate sacrifices. His Majesty will doubtless understand himself that it would be best to abdicate."

The heads of those who listened kept turning, with an uneasy frown, towards the door of the Emperor's work-room, where sentries stood immoveable and negro servants, all gold lace and braid, stepped softly in heelless slippers. They looked to see a Napoleon distraught and humbled, low-spirited and imploring aid—and so were ready to jostle him, to push him aside, since they recollected the wise rule which had obtained during the Revolution, the rule telling to kick a falling man.

There came the sound of a chamberlain's staff tapping against the floor, and all whispers and conversation ceased. A strained and deathly silence fell. Slowly the heavy double-panelled door was flung open, and Napoleon entered the room.

He was just the same as when he had left Paris that spring. He had not altered nor grown older in appearance. His deep, thoughtful eyes, which seemed to read the mind of other men, were as keen and proud as ever. He gave a long look over the overcrowded room, and each man in it instantly felt himself to be one of a herd of sheep, obedient towards their shepherd. Thoughts as to flight, humiliation, or abdication on his part, fled from the mind of all.

A small man but a great, Napoleon made his way through the crowd. Though his stature was less than that of many of them, he seemed to tower. He alone knew, clearly and precisely, what he wanted and what should be done for France.

The noble Marquis de Choisy felt both mean and depressed. Shoving his friend's letter about Louis XVIII more securely into his waistcoat, he made the Emperor a deep and courtly bow.

The only sound audible throughout the hall was one man's short, firm, and elastic footfall.

The Emperor stepped into the middle of the hall, sweeping everybody present with his glance. His voice was heard—that firm and confident voice which knew no hesitation, and there-

fore no gainsaying—and each hearer knew it for that of a man who asked neither aid nor advice, who came merely to dictate his will, to issue orders and to rule. He waited for no painful and unpleasant questions, but himself voluntarily explained what had happened.

"Moscow," he said, "was in our hands. We overcame all difficulties. Even the fact that the city had been set on fire did not in any way change my plans. It was only the severity of the Russian winter that conquered our Army, whose heavy losses were due to the cold nights, and not to the weapons of our enemy. These losses, however, did not break the spirit of the Army. In those difficult circumstances, the welfare and happiness of my peoples are dearest of all to me. . . ."

The words of this short speech were mentally caught up, to be remembered with jealous care. On that very same day, hundreds of letters sped to each nook and corner of France, telling folk "what the Emperor had said."

Everywhere there followed gladness and rejoicing—not only in France, but in Rome, in Florence, and Milan and Turin, in Hamburg and Amsterdam and Mayence, as well as in Paris. The sufferings and doom of the "Grande Armée" were forgotten. In France no less than in the Don country, people could look upon the losses in killed and wounded—in Ataman Platoff's wise phrase—as upon: "a private affair." Outwardly there was no sign of aught but gladness at the Emperor's return. The Emperor was back in Paris, and universal confidence took the place of recent unease.

France was prepared to make fresh sacrifices.

XV.

From early morning to late at night, Parisians stood in crowds at the gates of the Tuileries, waiting for the Emperor to drive out.

The Emperor, however, never left his work-room. The staring crowds in the street saw coach after coach go by, pre-

ceded by outriders and with footmen standing on their footboards behind; saw ministers with bulging portfolios emerge hurriedly out of their coaches and rush up the entrance steps. Every now and then a courier would dash out of a side door, enter a post chaise, and depart rattling about Paris with much noise of wheels. Mounted army messengers kept riding in or out of the Palace gates, bearing heavy leather satchels. At about four o'clock of a misty December day, all the white blinds at the big windows of the Emperor's work-room would be pulled down, and lights appeared behind them. These lights went on burning until late into the night, and sometimes until dawn.

The Emperor was hard at work.

A hundred *cohortes,* which had been formed by Napoleon before his march into Russia and garrisoned in various towns, were now armed, drilled and trained, and eager for the fray. Recruits for the year 1813 were concentrated at various appointed places, clad in uniforms and armed, and might be drawn upon at any time to complete battalions in the field. The one thing needed was to inspire them with the real spirit of Napoleon's troops. For this purpose the Emperor ordered the formation of *cadres,* sufficient for 150 battalions, of experienced officers and non-commissioned officers. Some 40,000 well drilled artillery-men were ready to be drafted into the army. It would be a more difficult thing to complete the cavalry, but it was hoped to arrange even this satisfactorily. Northern Germany was to be drawn upon for remounts, and several thousand horses had already been sent to the remount depots in Metz and Mayence. The *gendarmerie* was to furnish up to three thousand officers and non-commissioned officers to assist in forming fresh cavalry units.

When spring came round again, a new army of 300,000 men was to be ready to replace the one which had perished in Russia.

In the midst of this constant, feverish work, Napoleon awaited news from "there," from the banks of the Niemen and the Vistula. . . .

And this news came in, black news and dread. Behind the

glitter and pride of newly formed legions, behind the reassuring sound of imposing figures, only Napoleon could grasp and appraise the significance of what was going on far away from France, on that front which had been almost forgotten by all.

Murat, the man whom he had loaded with favors, whom he had made King of Naples, who was married to his own sister, and had been his colleague in the early days of the Revolution, the iron-willed chief of the cavalry, Murat had given way to despair. Murat, the bravest of the brave, has lost courage! The Army had remained in Vilno just the time it took to march through, and no more. It had not refitted and re-provisioned at the supply depots there; worse than that, it had not even set fire to them in its hurried retreat. And so all war material and supplies had fallen into Koutouzoff's hands. . . . Worst of all, Murat had voluntarily abandoned the Army and returned to Naples, after handing over the command to Prince Eugène de Beauharnais.

After this, on whom could Napoleon rely?

The Army had fallen back beyond the Niemen and the only reason why it had not retired still further was, that the Russians had stopped at the Niemen. After suffering from cold and privations in Russia, the French marshals and generals seemed to go to pieces as soon as they reached warm quarters, a mild climate, and plentiful supplies in Prussia. They sickened and died one after another, merely because of a too sudden change for the better.

Marshal Berthier, Prince de Neufchatel lay ill in Königsberg. Both Lariboissière and Eblé had died in Prussian featherbeds. Many a divisional commander and brigade general lay sleeping in the cemetery of some German town or village; many more were reported ill, and there was little hope that they would rise from their sick bed as hale and hearty as before.

Sickness and death were mowing down the ranks of Napoleon's army chiefs, and he could find nobody to replace them. And something worse than sickness and death stalked among them. Treason was abroad.

General Yorck, who commanded the Prussian Corps in the

rearguard of General Macdonald, had taken advantage of his position to enter into negotiations with Diebitch, the Russian General, and had surrendered to him with his entire Corps. On the 19th of December he had written a letter to Macdonald in which, with frank cynicism, he avowed the utmost indifference as to what Europe might say regarding his action.

But "Europe" was silent. Who knows? It may be that it justified, or even applauded, what the treacherous general had done.

"Give the falling man a kick. . . ."

"But am I really falling already?" thought Napoleon.

Having dismissed everybody from his presence, he was sitting alone in his work-room at a great pile of papers, dispatches and reports. On the table, the candles in two five-branched candelabra were burning low. Absolute stillness reigned throughout the sleeping Palace. The fire in the hearth was almost out. Outside, the January night was cold and foggy, and its chill was invading the work-room. Drowsiness crept on the Emperor; the legible letters, the straight rows of words in calligraphically written reports from ambassadors and agents, danced before his eyes.

"The King of Prussia is seeking to obtain an interview with the Emperor Alexander. . . . That means Prussia will leave the coalition. Her example will be followed by Westphalia, then by Bavaria and Saxony. . . . Bernadotte, King of Sweden, is conferring with Alexander for the purpose of opposing France. But is not Bernadotte a Frenchman? After that, who can be astonished at what Yorck has done, the devil take him! And Generals Moreau and Jomini have entered the service of the Emperor Alexander—against France. The very air reeks of treason."

Ah! the pain he felt was no longer that little dragging pain, the needle-like stab near the heart, experienced in those dire summer days when Heaven's thunder rolled about the Niemen valley. No; it was a deep, an open wound he suddenly bore. It was the most fearful of all blows life could deal—the death of belief in his allies, in his generals, in his soldiers. The death of belief in everybody.

The candles in both candelabra spluttered and went out. Their smouldering wicks, with a tiny red spark at the end, stuck crookedly in small pools of melted wax, giving off a bluish, flickering flame as they died. The early dawn came through the windows. The drums of the Palace Guard began to beat the reveille, and their dull beat was plainly audible in the silence of the room.

The Emperor walked through to the neighboring "salon." In a couple of hours another busy day would begin for him; people would pour in with reports, with inquiries, and with gossiping tales. He ought to lie down, if only for an hour.

Napoleon went up to where his own portrait hung on a wall. The artist had portrayed him as he had been on the great day of Arcole Bridge. The red, white, and blue of the Tricolor made a background for his flying hair. His thin face wore a look of austere and lofty resolution. The light of battle seemed to lend it a high sheen. The lips were compressed, the eyes ablaze. The light, slender figure was energy and animation incarnate. . . . Yes! that was himself as he had been—in the days of Bonaparte.

A huge mirror, in a frame, stood between the windows. Napoleon walked up to it. . . . Could that be Bonaparte?

He wore a gray surtout over his uniform—flung on in the work-room when it had turned cold, and the fire had died out. Three buttons of the white waistcoat were undone at the spot where he was wont to thrust his hand in; the waistcoat itself had assumed an ugly fold about the fat, protruding stomach. The face, which had fallen in and had taken a yellowish tint, wore a frown. Dark shadows lay under the eyes. And in these eyes, taking the place of intrepidity and valor, lurked gloomy suspicion and utter weariness.

The Emperor turned away from the mirror and again approached the portrait. Mutely, his dry lips whispered an appeal:

"Bonaparte—save Napoleon!"

He called to mind that dark and painful episode between Josephine and himself, when he was no more than First Consul. Josephine had wanted him to save and organize France for

her lawful King. . . . But he had saved and organized France for himself.

He went up to the window and gazed out at an awakening Paris—the city which was all his own. From the Vendôme Column to the last little turning, it was a memorial to himself, to his victories, his Marshals, his doing and being. He had raised Paris to its greatest splendor, had beautified it, had given the city all. . . . And the city had become his.

Again the Emperor stood gazing at the portrait of that Bonaparte who had won Arcole.

"No," ran his thoughts, "should a new Bonaparte appear, he would never save Napoleon . . . just as Napoleon did not save the Bourbons. He would only play his own hand. . . . And, saving France, would but save it for himself."

Once more the Emperor strode to the mirror. Drawing himself up, he sought the ancient fire, the features of the man that had been. . . . "I shall manage somehow," he thought; "I shall scramble through without help from my Marshals. Alone . . . as I was in Italy—as I was everywhere."

Suddenly, overwhelmingly, he yearned to believe in his star. He glanced at the Cross of the *Légion d'Honneur* which he wore on his breast, and it called to mind the five rays of that star which, out of a window of the izba at Stoudianka, he had seen shining in a crystal-clear, almost icy looking sky.

"No, my star has not yet set! Was it not I who gave the French people glory, order, and prosperity?"

Why should those bridges over the Berezina suddenly rise in his memory? Why should he remember those abandoned carts, with their freight of rotisseurs? The Emperor frowned, sighed heavily, and sought his bedroom. His valet was waiting up for him.

"Undress me, Marchand," said Napoleon. "Should I fall asleep, wake me in an hour's time and bring me some strong coffee."

Those who had seen the Emperor at some great reception, would never have recognized him now. This was an old, sick and feeble man.

XVI.

It was on the 1st of December that the remnants of Napoleon's Army, amounting to some twenty thousand men, had re-crossed the river Niemen. Murat, King of Naples, who was in command, had set up his Headquarters in the village of Skrautz. The Russian advance-guard, under Major-General O'Rourk and General Count Platoff, moved forward to the village of Zizmory. Vilno was occupied by Admiral Tchitchagoff. The Life-Guards Cossacks were appointed to act as bodyguard to the Emperor and dispatched to Vilno, where the Imperial Headquarters were to be and where the arrival of the Sovereign was awaited from day to day.

Life in the Cossacks Regiment became more strenuous and more ceremonious with the Emperor Alexander's presence at Vilno. Not only were horses groomed and currycombed and kit and ammunition furbished, but sentries, orderlies, escorts and gallopers were constantly being inspected.

The Emperor arrived in all the pomp and glitter of his Court, with his Court Marshal, his camp church, and Court choir.

On the 1st of January the Imperial Headquarters left the Niemen behind them. The war had passed Russian confines, and was now to be waged in foreign territory—in Prussia, which had become Russia's ally.

Spring had come early that year. The sunlit days were translucent and clear. The fields and meadows of Prussia were clothed in green; a pale wave of anemones washed the borders of its forests. From beds of moss shyly peeped the heads of scented, mauve tinted violets. Golden furze and waxen may bloomed about its hedges. The blue distance was filled with fragrant vernal warmth. Larks sang in the fields without cessation.

On such days as these the Emperor Alexander left his carriage and rode out on horseback. In a tight-fitting uniform which showed off his slender figure to advantage, wearing tight

white buckskins and high, sharply pointed boots of black patent leather, managing his splendid charger faultlessly, he stood out from his suite, and even at a distance was easily recognizable as the Russian Emperor.

Behind him rode his A.D.C. Generals, officers of the suite, orderly officers and orderlies, in one gay and clamorous cavalcade, their helmets, cuirasses, sashes, and embroideries a-glitter with gold, sabres clattering, pelisses flying in the breeze, headgear decked with every imaginable kind of aigrette, plume, or feathers.

In accordance to the wish expressed by the Emperor, his Life-Guards Cossacks sang on the march. Tambourines tinkled, pipes fluted, and the German bagpipe droned. Kouzma's young tenor voice rang out clear. He had been appointed with his squadron to escort the Emperor, and the nearness of the Sovereign, the glitter of Alexander's retinue, made his head swim.

A clean little German town rose toy-like from its surrounding fields. From a tall old rectangular church spire, built of stone, came the even sound of bells:

"Ding-dong . . . ding-dong. . . ."

From the very gates of the town to the Emperor's Headquarters, the road was lined with stout German army veterans, supremely comical in their old-time uniforms and brass grenadier helmets. The bayonets of their heavy muskets, clumsily held, seemed to wave in time to the air the Cossacks sang.

Before the door of the house made ready for Alexander, a bevy of rosy-cheeked girls in white frocks and aprons, holding green garlands and wreaths of anemones and violets, awaited the coming of the Russian Emperor.

Alexander dismounted. Two of the girls ran up to him and, bending the knee in a ceremonious German curtsy, crowned him with a violet wreath. All the Germans in the square waved their caps. A clergyman made a speech of welcome. Alexander stood before the man in his flower wreath, and listened with a smile to his pompous, rolling phrases. After the pastor came a man wearing an ancient black coat and a

powdered wig, who read verses composed in the Emperor's honor.

Spring sunshine, young and merry, lit up the scene.

At last the Emperor entered the house, his suite scattered to other buildings close by, and sentries were set. But the populace did not disperse. Crowds still stood under the green arches. When dusk fell, bands played in all the squares, tar-barrels were set alight, and fire-works let off. They whizzed and flew up to the dark sky, and fell in a many-colored rain. Russian soldiers danced with the town's blond daughters, and Kouzma was also among the dancers breathing the scent of print dresses, kid boots and sweetish German perfumes.

This gay festival of spring and victory lasted till late in the night, mingling beauty and carouse, the glitter of uniforms and drunken songs.

When at last Kouzma took a rather buzzing head home to his night quarters, he thought, with an instant surge of sadness: "And this is war." . . .

Whilst at Kalisz, the Emperor stayed in the school building of the Cadet Corps. It was the first week of Lent, and he fasted and took the Communion.

When they entered Silesia, everything was still more gay as they followed roads which wound among green hills. Neither the thunder of battle near Lützen, nor the death of Koutouzoff, nor the retreat of the Russo-Prussian Army from Dresden, nor defeat at Bautzen and Würschen, seemed to alter the festival character of the spring campaign. Napoleon inspired no fear. Checks and non-success cast nobody down. They did not diminish faith in ultimate victory, and nobody troubled about them.

Strangely enough, Napoleon won victories, yet stubbornly sought peace.

On the 1st of May General Shouvaloff and the Prussian General Yorck, who had so unconcernedly betrayed Napoleon, were sent to Régnier's outposts to begin peace negotiations, and on the 23d of that month, at Plesswitch, General Barclay de

Tolley and Marshal Berthier signed an agreement for a six weeks' armistice.

News of this reached Napoleon at Neumarkt, just as he was entering the open carriage which was to take him to Dresden. His secretary took his seat by the Emperor's side.

"Your Majesty will permit me to offer congratulations on the conclusion of an armistice," he said.

"If the allies do not wish for a conclusive peace," said the Emperor thoughtfully, "this armistice may prove fatal to us."

The carriage had now left the town. Napoleon looked back and said in a low voice, as though thinking aloud:

"I think I was wrong in consenting to an armistice. Had I continued to make war as I still can do, the Emperor my father-in-law would not have wavered as he is wavering now. Oh! that Metternich! What a false face he has, and what cunning!"

Napoleon's General Headquarters were at Dresden, those of the Emperor Alexander being first at Reichenbach and then at Töplitz.

Both sides were making preparations for further military activity, although fêtes, parades, and reviews were endless on both sides. It seemed as though each belligerent party were trying, by the brilliance of its uniforms, the lavishness of its entertainments, and its care-free and joyous hospitality, to win the hearts and entice to its allegiance members of the opposing camp, to incline the opposing troops to treachery, and to grow strong by reason of its enemy's weakness.

During these festival summer days, however, all the French Army, from marshals to the latest joined conscripts, dreamed of peace and considered any further continuance of war to be impossible. The soul of the entire nation was filled with a great weariness after the Russian campaign, and yet another war was held to be unnecessary and purposeless.

In the Russian Army, on the other hand, all this holiday spirit of merry-making did but serve to increase martial ardor. This was plainly evident everywhere. When a colonel in one of the regiments started reading to his men something out of regulations in regard to the necessity for courage on the part

of a soldier, shouts were raised in the ranks: "Why say these things to us? The mere thought of Mother Moscow would make any lad take the devil by the tail!"

And this enthusiasm which permeated the advancing troops was increased by tidings from the rear. News reached them from home that, whenever Russian peasants, on taking French prisoners, found their own countrymen in service among them, they bayoneted the Frenchmen and buried the Russians alive.

It was not only Kouzma who, during all this festive period of armistice, wrathfully clenched his fists and said: "We don't want peace—give us Paris! Our Moscow must not have suffered in vain. We won't return without having worked our will in Paris!"

Taking a leaf out of Kouzma's book, Prince Serbedjab-Tiumen howled: "Give me Paris! I want to set Paris alight!"

This was becoming the universal thought. On parade, during fêtes, reviews and merry-makings, nobody spoke of peace and of returning home, but of Russia's further advance.

PART FIVE

I.

At Dresden, the Emperor Napoleon occupied the Villa Marcolini, which was situated outside the town. Life here was half military and half Court life. The villa was embowered in greenery and flowers. The windows of the Imperial apartments looked out onto a thick and shady garden. Napoleon's bedroom and quiet work-room were in the right wing of the villa. The left wing was occupied by Marshal Berthier, Caulaincourt, the Emperor's two secretaries Fain and Mounier, and by Colonel d'Alba. In the main building, between the two wings, were a large salon and two smaller drawing-rooms. Here the Emperor received those who asked for an audience.

It was eight o'clock in the morning. Absolute stillness reigned throughout the Emperor's residence. Napoleon lay in a large soft bed with fresh bedclothes. He had been awake for some time, and lay on his back listening to the distant sounds that reached his ears, although muffled, through the garden. The blind, patterned by the shadows cast by the trees, stirred at the window. A delightful scent of flowers, of morning freshness, and of dewy grass, came through the open casement. The Emperor inhaled it, taking a deep breath, but it engered melancholy thoughts in him. Birds twittered in the branches, and the gravel crunched under the feet of the sentries. The horse of the vedette of the Chasseurs-à-cheval snorted somewhere not far off.

From beyond the garden came the distant beat of drums and words of command, followed by vigorous cries of *"Vive l'Empereur!"* and yet again and again *"Vive l'Empereur!"* . . . *"Vive l'Empereur!"* The new Army was being drilled on the field of Osterwiese. Old corporals were teaching the young conscripts how to greet their Emperor.

Napoleon listened long to these sounds. On the fields of Austerlitz and Wagram, no one had taught his Guardsmen to greet the Emperor. Enthusiastic cries of *"Vive l'Empereur!"* had voluntarily escaped thousands of lips.

His valet Constant came in, wearing a gold-braided livery. He brought the Emperor's well brushed clothes. The bronze clock struck eight. Another working day had begun.

Dressed in the long field surtout he wore in the mornings, with white buckskins and high boots reaching to the knee, the Emperor stepped into the adjacent small sitting-room, where coffee, toast, and butter were laid on a little round table. Court officials and Colonels of the Guard had assembled here for the *lever de l'Empereur*. To-day the Dukes of Weimar and of Anhalt were also present, as well as Monsieur de Narbonnes, the French Ambassador in Vienna, who had just arrived from Prague.

The Emperor was in good humor that morning. He glanced at the brilliant uniforms of his Guardsmen and the diplomat's long dark-blue swallow-tail coat, embroidered with palm branches. Everything was as it ought to be, as it had been of yore.

Napoleon greeted everybody amiably and took his seat at the table.

"Ah! . . . Narbonne! When did you arrive?" he said, drawing to him the cup of coffee that the valet had just poured out.

"Yesterday, Your Majesty."

"Well, what do they say over there? Do they still think I am dead? That a mechanical wax figure has been brought to Dresden instead of me? Do I look like a wax figure? And what do they say there about Lützen?"

"Ah, Your Majesty! They are simply dumbfounded. They never expected this. Some say you are a god, others that you are a devil. . . . But all agree that you are a genius."

Clever flattery is always pleasing. And furthermore, Napoleon was pleased by the victory he had won at Lützen.

"Yes, it is amusing. It is the old story of my being the

forerunner of Antichrist," he said, as though speaking to himself.

Napoleon rapidly drank his coffee and rose.

The *lever de l'Empereur* was over. The Emperor went to change his dress before riding out to inspect the troops.

Everything was as it had always been, as it had been during the best and happiest days of his career. It was as though Moscow or the Berezina had never been. Roustam was holding a gray Arab stallion by the bridle near the porch. True, the beast was no longer *Désiré,* but it was like him and as well trained, and galloped just as softly and smoothly on a loose rein. The Emperor wore a black three-cornered hat. He had invented it and always wore it. Berthier, Colonel d'Alba and a troop of Chasseurs-à-cheval were waiting for Napoleon near the porch. A June sun was shining brightly. The horses galloped noiselessly over the sand, and saddles creaked rhythmically.

Several hundred paces away from the garden, the newly formed reserve battalions awaited the Emperor. Drums began to beat and the men presented arms. The hairless young faces of the conscripts looked out at him from under their shakoes. Muskets were moving in their sunburnt hands. The soldiers did not look straight at Napoleon. There was fear and curiosity in their glance, but warlike enthusiasm seemed to be lacking. Their white trousers were tucked into their gaiters, and the gaiters covered a part of their shoes, which were mostly torn.

Without comment, the Emperor let the battalions pass in a ceremonial march before him.

The drums beat dully. The conscripts carefully struck the ground with their heels, taking short steps and raising a light cloud of dust on the field. There was a smell of sweat, rotten cheese and leather in the air.

"This regiment," reported Berthier, "has only been formed since the 27th of May.' . . . Look how firmly and boldly they step. It doesn't require much to give a Frenchman a martial aspect."

"Yes . . . yes . . ." said Napoleon slowly. He turned to-

wards the battalion commander who stood before him with lowered sword:

"Captain . . . I congratulate you on your promotion to Colonel."

The Captain bowed low and muttered his thanks, but the Emperor did not listen to him. He looked away somewhere into the distance, over the bayonets of the young soldiers, which glittered in the sun. Those other men, those men who had been with him in Italy, came into his mind.

Yes, those had been very different men. The proud and terrible fire of revolution had glittered in their eyes. He had quenched it, but had not kindled anything else in its stead. There had been the fire of Austerlitz and Friedland, but Moscow had extinguished it.

Having watched the marching squadrons of the cavalry pass before him, the Emperor galloped over Osterwiese field and rode towards the camps.

Near the Freiberg gates, on the right bank of the Wesseritz river, were stationed the regiments of the Würtemberg Corps. Their camp seemed to be a continuation of the gardens of the town. A kind of green fortress had been built there out of earth and turf. Blue, pink and white hortensias grew, richly blossoming, in beds about its bastions. Varicolored flower-beds were laid out in the square in front of the fortress. Behind them could be seen white tents, in the midst of which stood a statue of Pallas Athena. The officers' barracks were also ornamented with colored moss, garlands, and flags.

The soldiers pressed forward to the line.

"Vive l'Empereur! . . . Vive l'Empereur!" . . . thundered along their ranks.

The Emperor looked at the pale young faces of the lean Germans and an insistent, disagreeable thought involuntarily crept through his mind:

"When they betray me, they will cry in the same way: 'Long live Alexander!' . . . The Prussians have already betrayed me. The Austrians are on the eve of doing so. . . . The Saxons will do the same, although their kind King is devoted to me. The only question is—when?"

From the Würtemberg camp the Emperor rode to the French one. Turf had been laid in between the regular rows of light wooden barracks. Garlands of flowers hung from their roofs. Flags fluttered in the wind and their red, white and blue showed brightly in the sun. Shrubs and trees grew between the barracks. In the very center of the camp, there was a wide green lawn, ornamented with complicated flower designs and stone obelisks. A large plaster bust of the Emperor stood on an artificial mound. Behind the lines was a market, where tradespeople stood with their trays of merchandise. Gendarmes walked among them. Soldiers crowded confusedly together and greeted Napoleon with a resounding "Vive l'Empereur!" But there was no real, deep-throated assurance in these cries; or, perhaps, it only seemed so to the Emperor. They were all so young. Their dark, thin faces, which appeared flattened at the sides, were pale with a bluish pallor. Most of them were Parisians. "May be," thought the Emperor, "a long campaign has tried them. And perhaps it is not only the campaign. . . . Conceived in the days of the Revolution, perhaps the Revolution itself and the wars it brought in its train exhausted them?" Many of these soldiers were bare-footed and their uniforms were perceptibly worn.

The Emperor rode at a trot into the town. He could not but see the insufficiency of supplies and ammunition. He could not admire the colored moss and garlands of flowers, whilst knowing that his Army might begin to ferment at any moment like new wine. "Yes, those who were with me in Italy and Egypt were different. . . . They belonged to the old Royal Army. . . . But now they are no more."

The town, with its many gardens, with ivy twining about the walls of the houses and flowers on the window-sills and balconies, all lit up by the vivid summer sun, was festally charming. Many-colored petunias and fiery nasturtiums hung down in streaming cascades from the walls. Above them, in the shaded light of the windows, rivaling with the tender color of the flowers, one could see the lace caps and quaint attire of the Saxon women. Foot soldiers and mounted officers crowded the streets. Gold and silver, the vari-colored cloth of many

uniforms, white trousers, breeches braided in blue or yellow. . . . The gay Parisian speech everywhere, at the little tables of the cafés, on the benches of the boulevards, in the shops. Even on the Quay, near the bridge, Parisian boot-cleaners knocked the handles of their brushes against their boxes and cried: *"Cirez les bottes!"* [1]

At half past seven the Emperor dined alone with Berthier. Napoleon and his Chief of Staff had had a tiring day. They were silent at dinner. After the dessert, the Emperor said to Berthier:

"I am off! And you?"

"Permit me to remain here. I must look through the reports and put my papers in order."

"Always at work, my dear Berthier. . . . You ought to take rest. Do you think we shall have peace?"

Berthier did not answer at once. The Emperor even thought he had not heard his question. He did not repeat it and rose to leave the dining-room. Berthier also rose to follow him.

"At the price of your absolute humiliation and the downfall of France," said Berthier when he had reached the door.

"You think so?"

Napoleon stopped at the entrance of the vestibule.

"Metternich has taken matters in hands," added Berthier.

"Then the Austrians will certainly betray us. . . . But my father-in-law? . . ."

Berthier was silent.

An elegant barouche with gold-braided postilions on the box and on the foot-board, awaited the Emperor in front of the entrance to the villa. The Duke of Weimar was already standing in the porch. The Emperor took a seat beside him in the barouche, and its wheels crunched softly over the watered gravel. The light of the carriage lanterns fell on the large, sharp-pointed leaves of a handsome plane tree with a tall, mottled trunk. The barouche rolled along the dark avenues of the park, then its wheels clattered over a bridge and its lanterns became reflected in the narrow Wesseritz. To the left, beyond the Elbe, the lights of the new town could be seen. The streets

[1] "Clean your boots!"

were brilliantly lighted. The shops were full of people. Candles with shades made of paper or silk burnt on little tables in the cafés. Officers and women crowded everywhere.

Silvery feminine laughter resounded. The night was still and warm.

In the conservatory of the Royal Palace, among tubs holding palms or tropical ferns, a stage had been erected. The air was humid and stifling. Armchairs and chairs stood in rows before the drawn curtain. Surrounded by his ministers, the King of Saxony awaited the Emperor's arrival. A hushed murmur of voices rose in the conservatory, which was full of ladies, officers and courtiers, but it did not drown the gurgling of a fountain and of a small cascade which spouted over artificial rocks and fell into a round basin, where white lotus-flowers blossomed and goldfish swam.

The Emperor appeared in the doorway. He went quickly up to the King of Saxony, took him by the arm and walked with him to their gilt armchairs. The brothers of the King, the Prince Anthony with his wife, who was an Austrian Archduchess, and the Duke Maximilian with his seven children, sat down on either side of the King, as also the Duchess Teresa, sister to the King. Prince Anthony's wife, sister to the Emperor of Austria, took a seat beside Napoleon. She was markedly amiable to her kinsman to-day.

"Is it possible that they are betraying me?" flashed through his mind as he listened to her exquisitely amiable, flattering phrases.

Count Delte-Einsiedel, General Gersdorf, Count Nostitz, Baron von Friese—the stout, good humored Saxon Ministers—took up their places behind them, together with their wives and daughters. Further back sat a large company of specially invited officers, French Guardsmen, and ladies of the Saxon Court.

The orchestra, composed of eight musicians, played something tender, light and flowing. The curtain went up slowly and on the stage, against the background of a conventionally classic scenery where a white facade rose between bluish-green,

tufted trees, appeared Mademoiselle Mars,[2] who had specially come from Paris. . . . Her place was soon taken by Mademoiselle Bourgouin,[3] then by Mademoiselle Georges[4] and Talma.[5] . . . There was a brilliant, quite Parisian divertisement, followed by a short comedy in verse.

The melodious French language, coming from bewitching lips, blended into a pleasing whole with the music of sound, the beauty of verse, and the feminine charm of the actresses.

At ten o'clock of the evening the entertainment came to an end. Changing his mind, the Emperor gave up a drive round the town, returned home, and walked straight into his workroom, where his secretary, Baron Fain, was waiting for him.

Four candles, two in each branched candlestick, burnt on either side of the table. A silvery, moonlit night breathed softly outside the window. Bats flew about the sky in smooth curves. Distant stars were shining softly. The Emperor ordered the window to be closed and the blinds drawn. Nothing was to disturb the concentrated work of the master mind. His memory held all that was going on between Paris and Dresden just now. He knew where each marching battalion was spending the night; he knew before the commander of any regiment when its reserves would come up. The whole complicated and exact military machinery materialized before his mind's eye.

"Yes, France is working at high pressure. She foresees, she seems to know, that she will soon have to stand alone against the whole of Europe under Alexander's leadership. The rôles are going to be reversed. Is it possible that Paris may have to atone for Moscow? Is this what Fate is preparing? A secret society hostile to Napoleon, called the *Tugenbund,* has arisen in Germany and grows stronger every day. Members of this society have already appeared in Saxony. . . . True, the whole of the rear is crammed with French troops. Two reserve divisions are quartered at Wesel and Mayence. There is an observing corps under Augerau at

[2] Famous actress of Napoleon's time.
[3] Idem.
[4] Idem.
[5] Famous actor of the time.

Würzberg. General Milhau has concentrated three thousand Dragoons, newly arrived from Spain, between Frankfurt and Hanau. Reserve columns are marching over all the bridges on the Rhine. A retreat is easily achieved in those circumstances. Nevertheless, it is a retreat."

Before the beginning of this campaign of 1813, Napoleon had had but three hundred and fifty guns. The young Guard had fifty. This Guards Artillery was always lucky in battle, and invariably dealt successful blows at the enemy.

"Look here, Baron. Put down the number of guns we have at present from Hamburg to Bohemia."

The Emperor dictated by memory where and how many guns he had.

"What is the total?"

"One thousand three hundred and eighty guns."

They counted and calculated until late into the night. The Emperor and his confidential secretary counted the transports which were bringing supplies from everywhere, even from France, to the supply depots. For the sake of accuracy, Napoleon sent Fain to call Count Daru, who appeared immediately, accompanied by his own secretary, and by Colonel Solomon. They also were not asleep and had been working in the Quartermaster's Department.

Hours went by whilst they counted endless rations of flour, biscuits, and rice.

Figures flashed before their eyes, were added together and grew into long columns, and it seemed as though the Army had come to life again and war had once more become possible.

If only no treachery supervened.

Towards morning, when, by the light of a solitary candle, the Emperor had lain down on the soft bed and, having sent away his valet, had blown out the candle,—as soon as he was alone, heavy thoughts again assailed him and drove sleep away. Outside the window, the first rosy tints of dawn were slowly appearing. The blinds were growing yellow, and all objects in the room stood out one by one, as though arising out of the

darkness of the night. The brass candlesticks came into view and glittered on the mantlepiece, and the large three-cornered hat which lay between could be seen plainly. Little bottles with Eau de Cologne and scent became visible on the toilet-table. The room was as it were coming to life. Birds were twittering more and more loudly in the garden. A horseman rode over the gravel and the Emperor could hear it crunch under the hoofs of his mount.

Napoleon lay on his back, with his right arm under his head. He tried to go to sleep and could not.

How did it come about that he was now constantly making mistakes? The Russian campaign had been nothing but a series of such mistakes. And now. . . . Had he not himself propounded, as an axiom, the phrase: *"On ne périt que par la défensive."* [6] Had he not declared it to be the basis of military science? Yet here he was, obliged to retreat . . . to retreat . . . to retreat. . . . Had he not also said that *"les gros bataillons ont toujours raison"?* [7] But, if Austria now betrayed him, the Allies would be three times as strong as he was. Had he not always approved of Jomini's rule that *"sans une cavalerie expérimentée et suffisante les armées marchent en aveugle et peuvent être compromises"?* [8] Yet he had now so little of it, and he had against him the splendid Russian cavalry and the Cossacks of that elusive devil Platoff.

Forgetting all about sleep, the Emperor began to think out the plan of a new campaign. What if he were to take up his position on the Elbe, with Dresden as a base, and begin from here to deal lightning blows along all the internal lines of operation, on Berlin against Blücher, on Bohemia against the Emperor Alexander and Wittgenstein? In that way numerical superiority might yet be his at the necessary spot. Pictures of what he had seen that morning rose in his mind. The pale faces and thin bodies of the new conscripts. . . . The bare

[6] Defence means defeat.

[7] Large battalions are always in the right.

[8] An army must always be supported by sufficient numbers of experienced cavalry, otherwise it marches blindfold and can be in danger of being defeated.

feet in camp. . . . The torn foot-gear at the review. . . . Was it possible for men like those to march sixty versts on end? All the strength of the infantry lies in its feet—but his infantry had none. His Army was huge, but there was no means of commanding an army separated by such enormous distances. He might be able to manage, were it possible to give an order heard simultaneously in Dantzig or near Berlin, or to throw an army over two or three hundred versts in the course of a day. He, Napoleon, could gain victories even with such troops as he had seen to-day, but he could not be everywhere. Neither Vendammes, nor Victor, nor Ney, nor Bertrand, nor Lauriston, nor Marmont, nor Régnier, nor Poniatovsky, could replace him. Rapp was at Dantzig, Augerau on the Rhine, whilst Macdonald, Oudinot, Davout, and St. Cyr, were all of them far away. And the main thing was that they had no desire to fight. They had lost their liking for war. There only remained the Guard under Nansouty, with generals Latour-Maubourg, Sebastiani, Arriggi and Kellermann. But without Napoleon they were not worth much. In such circumstances, peace alone could save him and France.

Napoleon gave a heavy sigh and moved restlessly in his bed.

How friendly he might have been with Alexander, had Alexander not deceived him!

The Emperor turned on his side, propped one elbow against the pillows, and held his cheek in his palm.

"No, they will never grant me peace!" he mused. "The Emperor of Austria did not give me Marie-Louise willingly in marriage. What if I wrote to her—told her to ask her father not to betray me?. . . No, it would be useless. It is not the Emperor who is the decisive factor in Austria, but Metternich, that cunning and malicious snake, that hanger-on of the Emperor Alexander's. It is obvious that the Germans hate me—and so do Spain and Italy. They have all been conquered and crushed by me, and long for the opportunity to achieve revenge. Now they are all baying in my wake and will chase me like hounds chase a stag, until they can drag me down."

Importunate thoughts flashed through the Emperor's mind in a confused procession.

"And all around me dream of peace. Marshals, generals, and soldiers. . . . Everybody is weary. . . . Everybody longs to return home. War has become hateful to everybody.

"But am I not the first to hate it? I always wanted peace and, if I went on fighting, this was only because I was unable to obtain the kind of peace I wanted.

"No . . . it is no use thinking of peace. I must think of war. . . .

". . . But has my star really set? If I am no longer Bonaparte, I am still Napoleon.

"In 1805 the whole of Prussia was against me. I had been thrown back into the depths of Moravia. Retreat through Germany was impossible. Yet I was victorious at Austerlitz.

"In 1806, when I entered the Thüringen passes, Austria rose against me in the rear, and the Spaniards crossed the Pyrenees. Yet after that came Iena.

"In 1809, when I gave battle on the Danube on the confines of Hungary, the Tyrol rose behind me. The English had already flung themselves upon Antwerp. Russia was ready to forsake me. . . . Prussia was doing her best to create difficulties for me. . . . Yet I was victorious at Wagram.

"No, I must think of fighting, and not of retreating! All my thoughts must be for the front, and not for the rear. Alexander, Hannibal and Caesar did not think of what lay behind them when the hour came to fight for world dominion. . . . What if Alexander had been defeated at Granica, or Hannibal in the Alps, or Caesar on the Rhine? This might have happened. But there were fresh victories instead. The course of every war bristles with 'ifs.' And may not the future hold for me a new Austerlitz, Iena or Wagram?"

II.

On the 3rd of October, the Cossack Life-Guards Regiment was apprised, by their commanding officer's order of the day, that, on the 4th of October and under the leadership of their Majes-

ties, the Emperors of Russia and of Austria and the King of Prussia, the Allied Armies were to give general battle to the Army of the Emperor of the French and occupy Leipzig. Men and officers were to wear full-dress uniform and all their decorations, and the troopers were to put on clean shirts the evening before the battle. The regiment was to form part of the escort of the two Emperors and the King.

The 4th of October dawned dark and dreary. The sky was covered with clouds, threatening rain, and a thick fog lay in the valleys between the low hills. Life-Guards Cossacks in their shirt-sleeves and no uniform, with greatcoats thrown over their shoulders and wearing their red forage caps, went down the muddy street of the village of Descau to water their horses in a narrow, swampy stream. The horses stepped unwillingly over the wet meadow to reach it, their feet sinking deep into the miry soil, and then stretched their slender necks down to the cold water. Having watered their horses, the squadrons returned uphill towards the small stone houses of the village, where lights shone in all the windows, and above which rose the dark spire of the church belfry.

In the clean house of some German peasants where he, and several other officers were quartered, Kouzma Minaieff stood before a small mirror lit up by a candle, which reflected his healthy, ruddy face, glowing after its wash in cold water. He combed his dark chestnut hair and carefully tied round his neck the red ribbon of the Order of St. Anne, surmounted by swords. His orderly had hung his officer's red jacket over a chair and was fastening on the silver epaulettes and cord. On another chair lay Kouzma's heavy sabre in a silver sheath, with openings through which red velvet showed. It was an ancient weapon, inherited by Kouzma from his father, who, in his turn, had received it from Kouzma's grandfather. On the dark, dull steel of the blade was an inscription embossed in gold: "To Lieutenant-Colonel Kouzma Minaieff, in recognition of his loyal and faithful services," and lower down the Imperial name: "Elizavet." [9]

[9] The Empress Elizabeth * Petrovna, daughter of Peter the Great, always signed her name "Elizavet," as though she were a man.

* Elisaveta.

Sub-Captain Popoff had ridden during the night to Headquarters, whence he had brought the order of battle of the Allied Armies, assembled before Leipzig on the 4th day of October, 1813. It was drawn up in French, and began by mentioning the names of their Majesties the Russian Emperor, the Austrian Emperor, and the King of Prussia. Then followed the name of Prince Schwarzensberg as Generallisime of the Grand Army.

This order gave the strength of the Austrian Army at six Corps, thirty-nine thousand of which consisted of infantry and eleven thousand of cavalry. Then there was the "Corps principal" under Barclay de Tolley: two Russian Corps—sixteen thousand infantrymen and the Prussian Corps under Kleist—twenty-four thousand infantrymen and five thousand cavalry. The reserves, under the Grand Duke Konstantin Pavlovitch numbered 18 thousand Russian infantrymen and 8 thousand cavalrymen.

The Russo-Prussian Army under Blücher was approaching Leipzig from the north-west. It consisted of Russian infantry forty-four thousand strong, Russian cavalry numbering eight thousand, Prussian infantry numbering twenty-five thousand and four thousand Prussian cavalrymen. From the north advanced the Russo-Swedish-Prussian Northern Army, consisting of eighty-four thousand infantry troops and thirteen thousand cavalrymen. Taken as a whole, three hundred thousand allied troops were surrounding the 157 thousand of Napoleon's Army practically on all sides.

At Headquarters, where Popoff had been able to talk with many officers, it was freely admitted that, if Blücher's Northern Army—which was moving from Delitch and Landsberg—did not arrive in time on the morrow, the Allies would only equal the French in number.

"Yet," said Popoff, "the spirit that reigns at our Headquarters is such, that nobody doubts of victory. I only heard two or three voices raised to the effect that we should have Napoleon himself to deal with."

"Well, and what of it?" said Captain Jmourin. "We shall

defeat Napoleon as well. And now, gentlemen, it is time to mount. Our field march is already being played."

Kouzma put on the jacket which the orderly was holding in readiness, buckled on his sabre, and made the sign of the cross.

"All right," he thought. "I was a fool at the great battle of Borodino and did not manage to do anything worth doing. But now I shall look out for an opportunity of distinguishing myself. I shall capture Napoleon with my own hands. It shall be my Austerlitz. Not for nothing did I dream of Mother last night. She looked at me so lovingly and sorrowfully from under her shawl. Although I hardly knew her, still, she is near and dear to me."

He told the sergeant to give him his lance.

"You won't need it," said Popoff. "We shall be in reserve during the whole of the battle."

Kouzma looked at him angrily without answering.

Dawn was beginning to light up the courtyard. Near the porch, the orderly held by his bridle a well fed Vorontchik, who had grown fat on Saxon oats. The red, silver-braided saddle-cloth made a vivid splash of color in the gray fog.

The squadrons received their colors, rode up the hill to the village of Göhren and halted where the foremost files met the infantry columns of the Guards Corps. As the late autumnal sun rose it lit up the white horsehair aigrettes and black shakoes of the marching infantry. Water-cans jingled, and a healthy, strong smell of cheap tobacco, leather, sheepskin, and human perspiration rose in the thick, damp air. The infantry descended into a valley, crossed a stream over several bridges, and began to deploy in battalion formation.

It had grown quite light. The autumnal sky was gray, overcast and melancholy. The mist rose in white drifts and coils, and stretched between the low hills. In the distance, about four versts off, one could see yellowish-brown slopes which looked as though soaked in water. Above a dark stream edged with dry sedge showed the white walls and red roofs of the large village of Lieberwollkwitz, and behind them the yellow-brown mass of a large wood. Near the wood, the white

lines of the Austrians stretched in regular files, with infantry in front and cavalry behind.

Light gusts of the morning wind occasionally dispersed the fog, pressing its white folds to the earth, and the varicolored houses, the belfries and walls of Leipzig would appear on the gray horizon, about ten versts away. In front, about four versts off, so Kouzma judged, the French Army was rapidly deploying, surrounding a large, low lying hill in a wide semicircle. The color of its uniforms was washed out by the distance and the fog, rendering it almost impossible to distinguish between infantry and cavalry. It was as though dark ants were crawling there, far away, along the slopes of the hill, drawing out in straight lines, forming up, turning about, and suddenly stopping. When they stopped they were almost invisible, and then wood-fires made a splash of yellow light and low, white columns of smoke curled lazily upwards.

To his left Kouzma saw a wide, swampy plain, over which several streams flowed curving between green banks. Meagre shrubs with greenish-brown leaves grew in between, and here rode the Guards Hussars in narrow files, their red pelisses vivid against the green background. Their horses' fetlocks sank in the swampy soil. They scattered over the meadow and along the stream, looking for a ford, and could be seen crossing the streams and galloping to catch up with their regiment.

Somewhere to the right a band began playing "How glorious is God in Zion," and, in the gray coldness of the foggy morning, the slow, long-drawn trumpet sounds seemed infinitely sad. From elsewhere came the beat of drums and the distinct reply of a regiment to some officer's greeting.

Kouzma looked at the brazen, green-limbered guns being brought up to their positions, and, from the very distance which separated them from himself, understood that once again, as at the battle of Borodino, he would be a mere spectator of the terrible carnage which was about to begin.

His regiment was drawn up in column, and the order was given to dismount. Only the fourth squadron, which was on duty near the Emperor's person, was missing.

Kouzma stood leaning on his lance in front of the second

troop of His Majesty's Life-squadron. The damp cold made him shiver under his red jacket. Behind him, sheltered by their horses from the wind and gathering in groups in order to get warm, stood the troopers. Bluish tobacco smoke rose from their pipes, curling above the white horsehair aigrettes of their shakoes, worn at a dashing angle on one side.

"Leave off smoking," resounded in the ranks. "The Emperor is coming."

Colonel Efremoff's command rang out:

"To your horses. . . . Mount. . . ."

III.

ACCOMPANIED by the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, as well as by a numerous retinue, the Russian Emperor rode at a foot-pace up a low hill. On reaching the summit of it he reined in his horse and stopped there without dismounting. The squadron which had followed him joined its regiment and took up its appointed place. Of the Life-Guards Cossacks, only Count Orloff-Denissoff, who commanded the regiment, its A. D. C., and two trumpeters, remained with the Emperor. They were quite near and Kouzma could clearly distinguish the group of red jackets amidst the dark uniforms of other officers and the white uniforms of the Austrians. He saw the Imperial carriage, with the Emperor's coachmen, Baikoff, on the box, drive to the village of Gossa at the foot of the hill, as also several wagons of the Court-Marshal's transport train.

One of the officers dismounted, and, unfolding a map before the Emperor, reported something to him, marking the distance with the compasses. It was difficult to hold the map as the wind was bending it, and the Emperor, leaning down in his saddle, held it by an edge. Then, turning to the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, he said something to them, apparently translating the officer's words.

Kouzma looked upwards (their squadron stood on the slope of the hill) into the Emperor Alexander's handsome face.

"Oh, my beloved Emperor!" thought Kouzma. "How kind he is, how attentive to all these Germans. What a good man he is. What happiness it must be to die before his very eyes."

No more than a hundred paces separated Kouzma from the Emperor. There came an instant when Alexander, who was answering some question put by the Austrian Emperor, became thoughtful and half closing his fine eyes, looked in Kouzma's direction. It suddenly seemed to the young man that their glances met and that the Emperor could see all that was going on in his soul. A warm current flooded the whole of Kouzma's being, chasing away the feeling of cold from which he had suffered that morning. He drew himself up in his saddle, holding the reins more tightly and so making Vorontchik arch his handsome neck.

The Emperor turned once more to the Germans and continued to explain something to them.

In Gossa, the clock on the village belfry struck ten. Kouzma cast a glance over the fields. There was something ominous in the strained silence that reigned there. The fog had lifted, but the sky was covered with clouds and the large undulating field dotted with troops looked dark and gloomy.

Somewhere in the distance, straight ahead, a solitary cannon boomed. Then silence reigned once more. The field seemed to have grown still darker and gloomier. Suddenly the cannonade of a hundred guns roared simultaneously on both sides and the field became swathed in smoke.

Kouzma saw the long lines of the Russian infantry debouch from one side of the hill at the summit of which the Emperor remained sitting his horse beside the Austrian Emperor and the King of Prussia. A gust of wind blew the smoke aside and made it whirl and eddy, curling up in columns towards the sky. Waving standards became visible, brass trumpets glittered, music struck as bands moved forward, and drums began to beat. Count Wittgenstein's infantry had moved forward to attack. Like an echo reverberating among distant hills, there came in answer, from somewhere beyond the wood, the sound of music and the beat of other drums. This meant that General Kleinau's Austrian infantry had also moved for-

ward. Kouzma could see it pass at a hundred paces away from him. Innumerable guns were thundering in front, and it seemed as though a distant thunderstorm were rending the skies. Lines of Frenchmen appeared out of the smoke, and the Austrians ran back, retiring behind the wood. The Emperor dismounted and stood flicking at his shining boots with his whip. In front of them the cannonade roared without ceasing, but here, on the hill, it was so quiet that Kouzma could hear every word that was said among the retinue.

An officer appeared, galloping from the direction of the wood, which was hidden by the smoke. He was followed by a Hussar orderly who, though riding fast behind him, was losing ground. The officer made a short cut across the highway and galloped over the smooth meadow. He rode down to the stream and looked long—or perhaps it only seemed to be long—for a ford, and at last his horse, which had obstinately refused to enter the river, jumped into it and swam to the other bank. No more than a verst separated this officer from the Emperor. He rode up the hill over a ploughed field and his horse changed its gait to a trot. His black hat, red collar embroidered with silver, black uniform, and white buckskins became visible. Kouzma recognized him. It was Lieutenant Khomoutoff, one of His Majesty's A. D. C.s, who was quartered with Evgueny Ogloblin.

The officer's white buckskins were soaked in blood on one side. Seeing the Emperor, he jumped off his horse and, probably still feeling stiff from his gallop, walked up the incline with stumbling steps, holding his right hand to his hat.

"You are wounded?" asked the Emperor. His pleasant, calm voice sounded distinctly amid the strained silence of the retinue.

"No, Your Imperial Majesty."

"But where has all this blood come from?"

"Our fusiliers were in the wood as I rode through there. A cannon-ball killed one of them quite close to me, and his blood spattered over me."

"Very well. Make your report. What is it about? Who has sent you?"

"General Toll, Your Imperial Majesty," replied the officer.

He paused to take breath. Emotion, and his long gallop, prevented him from speaking.

"Take your hand down from your hat," said the Emperor. "Rest a moment. Now speak."

"Soon after nine o'clock," began Khomoutoff, who had probably composed his report on the way, "when the cannonade had begun, the Austrian Corps under General Kleinau, to which General Toll was attached as adviser, moved forward to attack the French. They marched for several hundred paces and halted near a height which commanded our entire position. . . ."

The officer who was holding the map pointed with his finger to the spot where Kleinau had stopped.

"I acted as orderly officer to General Toll," continued Khomoutoff. "We remained for some time standing there, notwithstanding the shot and cannon-balls which rained down on us. Half an hour had gone by when large columns of French troops appeared from beyond the village of Lieberwollkwitz. At the same time, the artillery fire increased in strength. As soon as the French began to run down the slope, the Austrians wavered. General Kleinau turned his horse's head back and galloped away; he could not be found for a long time. The Austrians fled in disorder, crying: 'Franzosen! Franzosen! . . .' General Toll, seeing that he would unnecessarily be exposing himself to danger, was obliged to retire and took up a good position further back. He rallied the fugitives, made them form into column, and stayed the advance of the French. Now he has sent Ogloblin, his A. D. C., to General Kleinau, who had remained far behind, to persuade him to organize his troops anew and advance once more. And he has sent me to beg Your Imperial Majesty not to be anxious, as he hopes to hold his position. When I rode away, the French had not moved."

"Very well," said the Emperor. "If you feel strong enough, and if your horse is not too tired, ride back to General Toll and tell him that I approve of what he has done. Let him get

into contact with General Platoff, whose regiments must be near the village of Seewartshein."

Khomoutoff saluted, putting his fingers to his hat, and rode down the slope.

In the valley where the tiny village of Washau lay between the dull mirrors of two small lakes, everything was swathed in smoke. Frequent musketry fire, interrupted by the thunder of cannon, rolled and echoed thence. Occasionally a long-drawn "Hurrah" became audible, only to be drowned by the incessant roar of cannon. Over an hour had gone by, and the noise of battle still seemed to be concentrated in the same place, that wide valley where the houses of the little village clustered.

Both Emperors, the King, and the retinue gazed with strained attention in that direction, waiting for news to reach them.

Kouzma's head was on fire. "Napoleon is there," he thought. "A fierce battle is going on near the village. Will not God grant me the grace of a moment to break into the French ranks, flying like the whirlwind on my Vorontchik, scatter his suite with my lance, and seize the villain? Ah! just wait! Kouzma Minaieff, the Cossack, shall yet be remembered! Let them bury after that, without either cross or prayers, a soldier who died for his faith, his Sovereign, and his country. I shall find glory and honor in Heaven! Here on earth, I shall be remembered by Nadenka and by all the rest. And Nadenka will teach our son Ivan to be like his father, who was killed after having made Bonaparte a prisoner."

Kouzma stood in front of his troop and gazed with strained attention in the direction where, in that low valley swathed in white cannon smoke, the guns spat their roaring volleys and whence a distant, hoarse "Hurrah" was wafted from time to time.

The battle had already raged for several hours and was still seething like water boiling in an enormous cauldron. The great battle of nations was going on, which was to decide the fate of Europe.

The gloomy, autumnal October day was drawing to its close. The sky was darkening. That victory which was so indispensable to Napoleon, was still eluding him.

IV.

KOUZMA remained half the day in one spot, leaning on his lance, without feeling either fatigue or hunger. The other officers munched biscuits. Kouzma's orderly brought him, too, some home-made biscuits from the Don country and a canful of water, but he only waved the man away. Heart and soul he was where, in front of him, white curtains of smoke enveloped the limitless battlefield.

Before him, from the low hill on the slope of which he stood, Kouzma could see rusty autumnal fields intersected by valleys and gradually ascending to the horizon. They were crowned by a taller hill, which was seen from afar rising above the sea of smoke, and which was the highest ground of the Leipzig battlefield. Napoleon and his Marshals were probably there, about seven versts off.

At about a quarter past two the enemy cavalry appeared from beyond that distant hill in distinct squares, with helmets and cuirasses gleaming dully in the uncertain light of the pale autumnal day. One could see the large dense waves of horsemen rolling over the green slopes and disappearing in the nearest valley.

Kouzma looked with emotion at the spot where it had disappeared, waiting for it to reappear. It came into view again on the next hill which rose tall and flat above the smoke-swathed valley where the main battle raged. Now it deployed its squadrons, flowing widely on both sides over a distance of at least three versts. The steel of unsheathed broadswords flashed dully on a background of gray sky, as the cavalry rushed down into the very thick of the battle and disappeared in clouds of gunpowder smoke.

Time seemed endless to Kouzma. As though in a dream, he heard the Emperor Alexander giving orders and saw Russian and Prussian officers galloping down the hill.

Suddenly, about two versts in front of Kouzma, the enemy squadrons began to appear out of the dense wall of white can-

non smoke. Their line was not as even as before, but it quickly straightened and linked up as they rode.

Kouzma could hardly believe his eyes. Endless rows of horsemen were rapidly advancing in their direction.

The Cuirassier Corps of General Latour-Maubourg, led by Murat, King of Naples and consisting of about eight thousand mounted men, had crushed the Russian infantry, taken a battery of twenty-six guns, and was now rapidly advancing on the village of Gossa, quite near which was the hill occupied by the Emperor Alexander.

The great battle of Leipzig seemed to be turning in favor of the French, and Napoleon, watching the battle from the heights near the village of Probstheid, might well consider that his fading star was about to add a new and glorious name to the glory of Austerlitz, Iena and Wagram—the name of Leipzig.

Kouzma gripped his lance tightly in one hand and fixed his gaze on the hill where both Emperors and the Prussian King were. The Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia were mounting. Part of the retinue were still afoot. Beside Alexander stood the Emperor's groom, with a horse ready for him to mount. He held its bridle with his right hand, and a stirrup with the left. The Emperor's carriage, with his coachman, Ilya Baikoff, on the box, was just driving out of Gossa. The wagons of the Court-Marshal's transport train were hastily galloping back down the road.

The Emperor Alexander was speaking rapidly to a Hussar General who sat his Arab stallion quite near to him; he rapped with his finger on the map which the officer held before him, and Kouzma thought he could see the Emperor's hand shake.

There was no time to look at the Emperor's face attentively, for the Hussars who trotted past him screened it from Kouzma's sight. Behind them came the Dragoons, and further away on the hill flashed the guidons of the Lancers' pikes. The Light Guards Cavalry was galloping to meet the French, and Kouzma could see how small and insignificant it looked in comparison to the long wave of French Cuirassiers which flowed towards it.

Before Kouzma had time to see what was happening to the Life-Guards Hussars, whose ranks were straightening as they galloped along, he heard agitated cries among the retinue:

"Colonel Efremoff!"

"The Emperor is calling for Colonel Efremoff!"

Efremoff jumped on his horse and rode up the hill like a whirlwind.

Instantly, the Cossack Life-Guards squadrons mounted without awaiting the word of command ("in Platoff's way," thought Kouzma), the Cossacks taking off their shakoes and making the sign of the cross. Their eyes flashed in faces suddenly grown pale.

Colonel Efremoff had already taken his place in front of the regiment.

He, too, had grown pale. As his black stallion was trying to break away, the Colonel laid his right hand, which held the unsheathed sabre, on his left to check him.

His Majesty's first squadron rode straight ahead down the slope to the stream, the rear squadrons swinging to the left in fours, thus converting a field column into a deployed front.

On the bank of the stream the ground was swampy. The powerful Vorontchik landed Kouzma in one leap on its opposite bank, but his Cossacks hesitated for a moment, scattering along the bank of the stream.

"Forward!" cried Efremoff fiercely behind them.

Whips rose and fell and the Cossacks gained the further bank.

Kouzma's troop was already moving on when he saw the French Cuirassiers galloping towards the Hussars, about four hundred paces in front of him and somewhat to the right. It was obvious that the Cuirassiers had a clear path before them, with nothing between them and the hill where the Russian Emperor was. As they swept down into the valley the Cuirassiers checked their pace. Kouzma was about to rush forward, but at that very moment Colonel Efremoff forestalled him. His red jacket and silver colonel's epaulettes were splashed with black, miry mud. He flung out his hand backwards and checked

Kouzma's impulse, obliging him to stop. The Cossack squadrons were rapidly stringing out to the right and left; no more than two hundred paces separated them from the French Cuirassiers.

The whole of Kouzma's body was strained, as though preparing to soar upwards. His mind was void of thought or recollection. Only his lips murmured mutely; "Lord, have mercy! . . . Lord, have mercy!"

Kouzma did not hear the words of command. Perhaps none came. He only saw the Cossacks tuck their lances under their arms for attack, and involuntarily did the same. The squadrons were still motionless.

"Forward!" cried Efremoff in a thick, hoarse voice.

The earth began to hum under the impact of horses' hooves, and the Cossack wave poured over the gentle slope of the valley.

Kouzma stood up in his stirrups, and, with his lance held tight under his arm, galloped forward out of the ranks. The wind whistled in his face, making his cheeks glow with the cold. He did not feel as though he were moving, but as though the Cuirassiers were advancing upon him. In a few instants he saw in front of him, somewhat to the right, a French general in a three-cornered, gold-laced hat, and a uniform with a gold shoulder-knot. His powerful, white-footed bay horse galloped heavily over the field.

Kouzma was about to make for the general, when a cannon-ball hit the enemy officer's horse, and both horse and rider rolled to the ground.

An enormously tall Cuirassier Colonel, who had been galloping behind the general, appeared before Kouzma. His black horsehair plume waved above his helmet and the golden epaulets of his rank quivered on his shoulders. Up swept his broadsword, either to deal Kouzma a blow or to point him out to his own men. The blue sleeve of his uniform seemed quite close to Kouzma's eyes. Kouzma aimed the sharp point of his lance right under the arm, and struck home. . . . So shrewd was the blow, that Kouzma himself almost fell out of

the saddle, and Vorontchik sank back on his hind legs. The wooden staff of the red lance splintered with a crash. The Cuirassier fell heavily on the ground and his horse galloped away. Next moment the Cuirassiers rushed at Kouzma, and he would have been thrown from his horse and crushed to death had not Vorontchik, with incredible swiftness, turned round to face the onslaught. Ears laid back, teeth a-grin, he shook his head fiercely, making the enemy horses shy right and left.

In a flash, Kouzma found himself boring through the foremost ranks of the Cuirassiers. His immediate field of vision was a narrow one, but he could see distinctly what was before him and, although not realizing it, knew instinctively what he was to do.

The Cossacks flung themselves at the Cuirassiers in a single wave, breaking into their ranks. Everywhere hoarse voices sounded, lances splintered and sabres clashed together. An old Cuirassier sergeant-major confronted Kouzma, sitting deep in the saddle, his dark, round eyes glaring from under his helmet. His face was a white, motionless mask. Kouzma threw away his broken lance, and, swift as a lightning flash, his hand with his grandfather's unsheathed sabre went up. . . . But there was no time to deal a blow with it, only to guard his own head from the Cuirassier's broadsword. His shako, from which the horsehair aigrette had been shorn, fell off his head and hung heavily from its silver cord. Kouzma whirled his sabre round and, with a sharp circular movement, struck the French sergeant-major on the cheek, severing his chin-strap. A stream of bright red blood coursed down the man's cheek, but he kept his seat and his arm rose to strike Kouzma. It hung helpless the next instant, however, letting the broadsword fall out of his hand. With someone's red lance suddenly thrust into his jaw, the Cuirassier fell off his horse backwards. It was sergeant-major Pershikoff who had come to Kouzma's rescue in the nick of time. His own Cossacks surrounded him all at once, and only then did he see clearly what was happening around him.

Individual skirmishes were still going on in his immediate

neighborhood. Further on, at the foot of the hill, he could see the Russian squadrons—Hussars, Dragoons, and Lancers—galloping in the direction of the Cuirassiers, followed by Prussian Dragoon and Cuirassier regiments. The French evaded the attack and turned back. The wave of Russian cavalry surged onwards.

Not more than a minute seemed to have passed before Kouzma found himself in the valley, where things were but dimly visible through a haze of cold gunpowder-smoke, in which individual figures could be seen. A trumpeter in a white-braided jacket, his neck all spattered with blood, rode past Kouzma on a white horse whose coat was soiled and rough. He was sounding a call, but so indistinctly, that Kouzma could not make out what it meant. At Kouzma's right hand appeared Ensign Kononoff.

"What is he sounding?" Kouzma cried out to him.

"The deployade."

The Cossacks were deploying over the field in a wide fan.

At the foot of the hill, to the left, green-limbered Russian cannon came into view, with men in blue French greatcoats bustling round them. They were hastily re-placing the guns on their limbers.

"To the battery!" cried Efremoff, who had suddenly reappeared in Kouzma's neighborhood.

"To the battery!" repeated Kouzma.

As though understanding the word of command, Vorontchik swept forward.

Two guns captured by the French were already speeding along the muddy road, bumping over its ruts and splashing mud about. A clear space had suddenly appeared round the others, and the Cossacks galloped up to them. Their third squadron surrounded the cannon. Jumping off their horses the Cossacks ran to the guns and turned them against the enemy.

There was an acrid smell of gunpowder in the wide valley. Several houses were on fire, and the flame hissed and roared among roofs and rafters. Crowds of infantry soldiers stood about in confusion. Corpses, muskets, broadswords and cui-

rasses strewed the ground everywhere. A long row of dead soldiers, their faces covered with their greatcoats, lay near a fence. The sharp sounds of infantry bugles rose above the crackle of flame and the infrequent rattle of musketry fire.

Somewhere quite near, to the left, drums began to beat lustily and bugles sounded the attack.

The Russian infantry rallied and, forming into column, began to advance and occupy the position rapidly abandoned by the French.

Near a small lake, about which dead soldiers lay in the trampled reeds, the Cossack Life-Guards trumpeters began to sound the rally. Kouzma rode towards the sound at a trot.

The Emperor Alexander, accompanied by his retinue, had left the hill near the village of Gossa, leaving the Cossack Life-Guards Regiment to pass the night where it was. A dark, damp night had set in, threatening rain. The wood-fires the Cossacks had lighted smoked and burned low. Dead troopers and officers were being carried to a common grave.

Kouzma sat near a wood-fire among the Cossacks, wrapped in the greatcoat he had thrown over his shoulders. He was shivering. Recollections of what he had just experienced flashed in confused sequence through his mind.

He remembered Colonel Efremoff's words, when he had ridden up to the regiment, wearing the St. George's Cross which the Emperor had just hung round his neck. "The Emperor thanks you all for your glorious feat," he had said. "His Majesty deigned to say that he was particularly pleased with you. He thanks God that you have come out of this terrible battle with comparatively few losses. He prays God that you may be as fortunate in the future as you were to-day."

Later on, Efremoff had told Kouzma that he would recommend him for the St. George's Cross as well.

"Is it possible?" thought Kouzma, "that one single moment when, with the lance in my hand, I felt the resistance of an enemy's body and almost fell out of my saddle, justifies my whole existence? And the St. George's Cross, and glory, are

my reward for this . . .? No, glory is only for those who have been killed. . . . For Colonel Tchebotareff, and the troopers Kopteff, Medvedeff, Boyarinoff, Pykhovkin, and others. Poor Pykhovkin! How gaily he waved his cap to me that day, when he galloped up to tell me that Emmotchka had come to the Cossack post. . . . Eternal glory to them, not to us. . . . We must justify our Crosses with our whole life, if we receive them. That one short moment cannot be my Austerlitz. My Austerlitz is yet to come!"

V.

THE French Army retired to its former positions, there to settle down in bivouac. The Emperor Napoleon's tents were pitched a verst beyond, in the center of a large, square sheep-fold, where the air was impregnated with the heavy odor of sheep's dung. Sentries stood at the entrance as usual, whilst vedettes of the Chasseurs-à-cheval guarded the Emperor's Headquarters on both sides. In the sleeping tent, the valets Marchand and Constant had just laid a carpet on the ground, which was strewn with sheep's dung, and were setting up the camp-bed. In the working tent, where the air was damp and stifling from the smell of the absent flock, candles were burning on a table and a map was spread out. The Emperor, who wore his hat and his tightly buttoned gray surtout, received the reports of the chiefs and adjutants there.

Outside the tent, which was lighted by the candles burning on the table, the night seemed darker still by contrast. The Grenadier sentries in their tall bearskin caps, were hardly discernable in the darkness. Everything was as it had always been during the most successful battles. The compasses close to hand, the map, the respectful voice of the page announcing those who entered, the agitated, tired officers who rode up to the tent with their reports.

Yet something different could be sensed in everything, in the whole atmosphere around.

This day of the Leipzig battle was not like Austerlitz, Iena or Wagram. It was more like Borodino. Then all sounds had also seemed to have been hushed, and there had been an unusual silence in the camps of the troops which had remained in their positions. Yet the ear could then have caught the distant creak of the retiring Russian wagon-trains. Now nothing could be heard from the enemy's direction, and reports reached the Emperor from all sides of strong reinforcements coming up to the Allies.

"The A. D. C. to the Duke of the Moskova,[10] Your Majesty," announced an exhausted page who was shivering with cold.

"Admit him."

A lean, tall man in colonel's uniform entered the tent, bending his long body to do so.

"Well, how are things progressing in Marshal Ney's Army?" said Napoleon. "I have been expecting you for some time. It is important for me to know how things stand to the north of Leipzig."

"Your Majesty, the King of Saxony detained me, and then I could not get out of town on account of the wagon-trains."

"Very well, very well! Let us get to business. Did everything go well in the end?"

"On the whole, yes, Your Majesty. The French arms have covered themselves with fresh glory. We fought twenty to sixty. Although deprived of the assistance of General Sougam's 3rd Corps, which had been sent elsewhere, and that of General Régnier's Corps, which had not come up in time, we, with our feeble forces, attacked three Armies commanded by Blücher: the Russian Army under Langeron, the Prussian Army under General Yorck, and the Russian Army under Sacken. We retained our positions in the villages of Mockern and Gross-Wetteritz, which had been attacked by Langeron and Yorck. The Duke of the Moskova ordered me to report to Your Majesty, that he hoped to retire without hindrance beyond the river Parta during the night. The Duke of Ragusa[11]

[10] Marshal Ney.
[11] Marshal Marmont.

will take up his position near Schönfeld, and the Duke of Padua[12] near Pfaffendorf with the cavalry and with Dombrovsky's Division. Your Majesty, it was a terrific battle. A hundred guns fired unceasingly at us for five hours. The best men of our naval regiments were killed. . . . Generals Compan and Frédérick, and the Duke of Ragusa himself, are wounded."

Napoleon listened to the A. D. C. with a frown, checking the disposition of Marshal Ney's troops with a sharp pencil on a piece of paper.

"Very well," he said. "Wait till I hear the reports of the other A. D. C.s, then I shall give you my orders. Who is there?"

The page appeared in the lighted triangle of the lifted tent's flap.

"General Bertrand's Chief of Staff," he announced.

Marshal Ney's A. D. C. left the tent, making room for a stout, stately general with protruding black eyes and a small, dark moustache.

"Well, how are matters in my good Bertrand's Army?" said Napoleon kindly. The Emperor already knew, from the day's reports, that near Lindenau, on the French Army's route to France, things had not gone well at first, but that afterwards there had been a turn for the better.

"The Austrians, Your Majesty, fought like devils to-day! One might have thought that their treachery had roused their courage. General Giulay's Corps attacked us with incredible fury and threw our vanguards back. We were almost pressed back into the Elster, all among the reeds. However, Marshal Bertrand got together all the troops he could and threw them on the bridges. We occupied Lindenau. Giulay retired to the south, to Klein-Pöscher, there will be nothing to hinder our retreat, if need be. Among the prisoners is our old friend General Merfeldt."

"The man who directed peace negotiations at Leoben and saved the Austrian reigning House by the peace of Campo-Formio? He, who during the night of Austerlitz sent a pencilled note about peace, which saved two Emperors?"

[12] General Arriggi.

"The same, Your Majesty. . . . He is as loquatious as ever."

"Send him to me."

The Emperor left the working tent. Outside the night was warm and damp. The cold wind had abated. It seemed as though dreary autumnal rain was about to pour.

The Emperor went into the sleeping tent and silently paced up and down,—four steps up and four steps down. As he turned, he wrinkled the carpet under his heel. He tried to put it straight but could not do so, and went on pacing up and down the tent.

"I must tell Constant to tie the ends of the carpet to the tent-poles," he thought. "That is what they used to do. But they have become slack. . . . They feel. . . . When I was victorious, everything was different. When it comes to defeat. . . . But is there any defeat?"

He recollected that, when it was already past two in the afternoon, after hearing that the infantry could not break the resistance of the Russians near Washau and was suffering heavy losses, he had given the order for General Latour-Maubourg's Cuirassier's Corps to attack. The King of Naples, with the colored ostrich feathers in his hat uncurled from the damp and sticking out dismally, had galloped off to lead the attacking cavalry in person. A few minutes had passed, and then the earth had hummed under the hooves of the heavy Cuirassier horses. The serried columns of the Cuirassiers' regiments had swept past their Emperor. Napoleon had seen the whole mass of eight thousand horses deploy and rush to encounter cannon-balls and musketry fire. Not more than half an hour had gone by when the complete success of the charge had been reported to him. The Krementchoug Regiment had been entirely wiped out, and the Cuirassiers had taken twenty-six Russian guns. He had further seen the Cuirassiers ride up and then down a slope and gallop in the direction of the hill occupied by the Emperor Alexander himself. Napoleon had been able to make him and his retinue out through a telescope. It had seemed as though victory ought to have been complete. And yet. . . . What, then, had happened?

The flap of the tent was raised and the page announced: "The Prince de Neufchatel."

Berthier came in. His face looked tired and as though shrunk.

"Your Majesty, General Merfeldt has been brought here."

"Wait a moment, my dear Berthier. Repeat what you told me after the King of Naples' attack. You told me then that for the Allies, *'la bataille était décidément perdue.'* [13] Was it so?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. *Le centre des Alliés allait être enfoncé, et la bataille décidément perdue."* [14]

Napoleon listened with evident agitation.

"Et bien?" [15]

"A la nouvelle de ce danger, l'Empereur Alexandre. . . ." [16]

"Et bien . . . l'Empereur Alexandre?" [17]

"L'Empereur donna l'ordre de charger au régiment de Cosaques qui formait son escorte. Cette poignée de braves, animé par la présence de leur souverain, fit des prodiges de valeur, et la cavalerie du Roi de Naples fut culbutée, et les Cosaques lui reprirent vingt quatre des vingt six pièces qu'elle venait d'enlever." [18]

"But this is incredible! One Cossack regiment to eight thousand Cuirassiers!"

"This regiment very cleverly and unexpectedly attacked the Cuirassiers from the flank, while the Russian Guards cavalry and the Prussian cavalry attacked their front."

"But this is simply incredible!" repeated the Emperor. "One Cossack regiment, and, as a result, a battle so brilliantly begun was lost. It appears that everything depends on Cossacks?"

[13] "The battle was undoubtedly lost."

[14] "The center of the Allies was on the point of being destroyed, and the battle undoubtedly lost. . . . "

[15] "Well? . . . "

[16] "On being apprized of this danger, the Emperor Alexander . . . "

[17] "Well . . . the Emperor Alexander?"

[18] "The Emperor Alexander gave the order to attack to the Cossack Life-Guards Regiment which formed his escort. Animated by the presence of their Sovereign, this handful of heroes performed prodigies of valor, and the cavalry of the King of Naples was defeated, the Cossacks taking back twenty-four of the twenty-six guns which it had captured."

"All depends on success, Your Majesty."

Napoleon stopped right in front of Berthier. His large, steel-gray eyes looked gloomily into the eyes of his favorite Chief of Staff, the man who had been his helper in all his schemes and plans. In that mute glance, Berthier could plainly read: "Et tu, Brute. . . ."

"Go on. . . . Tell me more . . . Tell me that it was owing to his star. . . . His God. . . ."

The Emperor left the tent almost at a run and entered the working tent, where General Merfeldt was waiting for him.

General Merfeldt, in his white and baggy, mud spattered Austrian uniform and dark-blue cloak, stood with drooping head, leaning against one of the tent-poles. An officer of the Chasseurs-à-cheval stood beside him.

"You may go," said Napoleon to the officer. "Well, good evening, Merfeldt. Fate itself seems to have sent you to me."

The Emperor sat down at the table and, leaning his elbows on it, looked long at the prisoner.

"Well, what can you tell me of my father-in-law? What does he want of me?"

"The Allies have decided to throw Your Majesty's armies back beyond the Rhine."

"They think it will be easy to do that?"

"Their forces are twice as large as yours," said Merfeldt in a dull voice, accenting the French words roughly. "I regret, Your Majesty, that the peace negotiations at Prague came to nothing."

"And do you think I don't regret it? I was always for peace, and have been obliged to go to war. . . . I am ready to give proof of this once more. . . . I offer peace now, at once—here, on the very battlefield. . . . Let the Elbe be for the Allies and the Saale for me. General, I set you free on parole. Your name is dear to me. It reminds me of the days of my glory, of Austerlitz. . . . You will be escorted beyond our outposts. I hope that, when you speak to the Emperors

about my offers of peace, your voice will reach their hearts. It will remind them eloquently of many things."

When Merfeldt had gone, the Emperor returned to his sleeping tent. Before entering it, he stopped and listened intently. In the stillness of the night, the crackling of the wood-fires and the distant murmur of thousands of voices were heard. Napoleon seemed to see them all, those hungry men who sat before the wood-fires, those pale youths with lifeless eyes. He remembered that day's report to the effect that third files often refused to fire because they were afraid of wounding those in front. This made it obvious that drill went on lamely. . . . During the day he had himself gone to watch Macdonald take the heights in the valley between Lieberwollkwitz and Zeigforsthein, then occupied by the Swedes. The enemy's guns poured a heavy fire into a regiment of French light infantry. Men fell right and left, but the French regiment closed its ranks and endured this fire without attempting to move or to retaliate. He rode up and asked what regiment it was. "The 2nd Light Infantry Regiment," replied General Charpentier. "That's a lie!" said Napoleon sharply. "The 2nd Light Infantry Regiment would make use of its muskets under fire." . . . On hearing these words, the men seized their muskets and rushed at the redoubt.

"Yes, those men rushed at it," thought Napoleon, "but only because I was there, and because they were Frenchmen. . . . But I cannot be everywhere. . . . How many were killed in vain just because there was no one to give them the order to move."

He thought of the ditches near the village of Washau, which were full of dead bodies. . . .

"This is terrible, but the main object has been achieved. . . . Lindenau is in our hands. . . . There is nothing to hinder retreat. Retreat! . . . Yet again retreat. But what is there left to me? . . . If the Allies do not accept my overtures of peace, just as the Emperor Alexander did not accept them after the battle of Borodino, what can I do but retreat? . . ."

The Emperor lay down just as he was, in his surtout and

high boots. The candles burning on the table worried him. He rang for Constant.

"Extinguish the candles," he said.

"Shall I undress Your Majesty?"

"No; you may go."

Darkness shrouded the tent, and a strained silence filled it. The only sound to be heard was the dripping of water from its rain-soaked canvas. The Emperor's thoughts were busy; he sought a way of escape, but found none.

"Why was it?" he asked himself, "that formerly thoughts came with such lightning rapidity? And decisions followed them. . . . I was younger. . . . Yes, younger. . . ."

He turned over on the bed, closed his eyes and sighed heavily. "Is old age beginning to take its toll? Or is the burden I have assumed too heavy for me?. . . Perhaps it is time to retire?"

He frowned and clenched his teeth.

"I must believe in my star and fight to the end. . . . Till victory—or death. No middle course is open to me."

VI.

NAPOLEON was awakened by the rhythmical sound of rain beating on the roof of his tent. Water streamed along its sides, and it was cold and damp inside. The Emperor stepped out into the open. Standing all hunched up, the old Grenadiers gloomily presented arms. The fur of their bearskin caps was wet and draggled. The straight lines of the falling rain seemed to confine and hem in the horizon, making it quite narrow. Silence lay over the battlefields. Not a single cannon-shot came from either side. Dawn was breaking.

Berthier came up. He had not slept at all, but had been working all night. Members of the retinue, adjutants, orderly officers and pages began to assemble. Their faces were drawn, wet with rain, and looked gray in the light of the overcast sky. All thoughts and conversations had but one theme. What was

happening in the enemy camp? . . . To the north, east and south? All was silent there. What did it mean? What were they doing? Were they weary after yesterday's battle? Were they licking their wounds or discussing the offers of peace brought by Merfeldt?

"Berthier, what have the outposts reported?"

The Prince de Neufchatel approached the Emperor and, by a sign, mutely requested him to enter the tent.

"Well?" Napoleon's voice was calm, but he felt his heart contract painfully.

"We have taken some prisoners. According to them, the Allies are waiting for Bennigsen's Army. The attack is put off till to-morrow."

"They will attack us to-morrow. . . . And what if we attack them to-day?" . . .

There was indecision in the Emperor's voice. Listening to the persistent sound of the rain and looking at the streams of water running down the canvas of the tent, he realized that it would not be easy to lead the tired regiments to battle on this soaked and muddy ground.

"We must first complement the ammunition and feed the men, Your Majesty."

"Have the caissons been sent to the parks?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Very well. Complement the ammunition, distribute cartridges to the men, and let the troops have plenty to eat. Has General Merfeldt returned?"

"Not yet, Your Majesty."

"Summon the Marshals. We shall discuss arrangements together. . . ." The Emperor stopped, sighed heavily, and added with an effort: "for to-morrow."

The rain went on pouring in torrents. The fields were soaked and slippery, wagon-trains stuck on the roads. The Emperor spent the whole day in the tent, giving orders as to how the troops were to be withdrawn and Leipzig more effectually covered.

At one o'clock in the morning, wrapped in a cloak, the Emperor rode to Leipzig. The rain had ceased. A thick fog lay

in the river valleys, making it difficult to find one's way. Chasseurs-à-cheval rode in front, the Emperor and the retinue followed. The horses sank in the mud and slipped going down the slopes. Pools of water splashed under their hoofs, and rain made the very fires of countless bivouacs seem feeble and uncertain as they glimmered through the fog. On reaching the mill behind the village of Probstheid, Napoleon pointed out Tonberg Hill as the key of his position for to-morrow's battle. From this village he rode on to Reidnitz, where Marshal Ney's Headquarters were. Finding him asleep he told the Marshal's A. D. C. to rouse him, and gave him his orders for the morrow. Then, riding through the silently anxious town, where oil-lanterns burned dimly, the Emperor proceeded to General Bertrand's Headquarters at Lindenau. The general was ordered to move his troops at once on Lutzen, so as to occupy all the crossings on the Saale before morning. Napoleon inspected the bridges at Lindenau and ordered fascines to be laid hastily over the swamps which covered the approaches thereto. The troops that were marching on Lutzen were to be replaced by two Guards Divisions under the command of Marshal Mortier.

It was already eight o'clock by the time the Emperor reached the village of Stotteritz, where night quarters had been prepared for him.

The Emperor had hardly had time to dismount, when a cannon-shot boomed from the enemy's camp, from the direction of General Schwarzenberg's position. After having hastily drunk a cup of coffee and eaten a rusk, Napoleon mounted once more and rode out to direct this new battle in person. He was conscious of having done everything that the leader of an army ought to do before a decisive battle. . . . He had foreseen everything, and prepared everything for victory.

Napoleon was in the saddle all day. He scorned danger and was constantly under cannon fire, and there were hours when it seemed that the enemy was about to retreat. And if he retreated . . . then . . . then peace negotiations might prove to be successful.

In the very thick of the battle, the Emperor inquired several

times whether General Merfeldt had returned. But the General had not done so.

Fighting went on everywhere and on all sides. After noon a cannonade began in the rear, quite near to Leipzig. Napoleon knew whose the guns were. They were those of the King of Sweden, the Frenchmen Bernadotte. . . . "One can struggle against the whole world," thought the Emperor bitterly, "but how is one to struggle against the treachery of the whole world?"

Napoleon galloped off to Reidnitz, where Bernadotte was advancing in an endeavor to break through the French front. His opponent was General Régnier, who was at the head of the Saxon Corps, and had sufficient forces to repulse the enemy.

On approaching, however, Napoleon saw from afar that there were no troops where Régnier's Corps should have been. A few minutes later everything became only too clear. The whole Saxon Corps, and the Würtemberg cavalry, had gone over to Bernadotte. Twelve thousand men who had formed part of the French Army, and their forty guns, were now firing at Napoleon's troops.

The Emperor remained calm. In the course of that fatal year he had become inured to treachery. He had already had a presentiment about it when inspecting the flower-decked Würtemberg camp near Dresden, with that statue of Pallas Athena in the center. . . . "One act of treachery more or less," he thought, "what does it matter? So long as the French do not betray me."

The short, gloomy autumnal day was drawing to its close, and the heat of battle was slackening on both sides. Bivouac fires were beginning to gleam everywhere in the damp fields. Napoleon rode up to the bivouac of a Guards regiment, where a large wood-fire was burning, and dismounted at last. Soldiers brought him some knapsacks for a seat and covered them with their greatcoats. The Emperor sat down near the fire, and, having sent for his senior military chiefs, began to dictate an order of the day.

He still thought that he could and must be victorious.

His artillery chiefs, who were Generals Sorbier and Dulau-

lois, rode up. They reported that the army had no more ammunition left for its cannon. Ninety-five thousand cannonballs had been expended during the course of that one day, and over two hundred and twenty thousand the last five days. The parks were completely denuded. A supply of not more than sixteen thousand remained, barely sufficient for two hours of fighting. Fresh supplies of ammunition could only be obtained at Magdeburg and Erfurt.

Retreat was inevitable.

On the following day, which was the 7th of October, Napoleon's Army retired, under the fire of an enemy who followed close on his heels. All had apparently been thought of beforehand, but, as always happens during a retreat, unforeseen circumstances arose. Fighting was going on in the streets of a surburb of Leipzig and an officer of the sappers had been ordered to blow up the bridge across the river Elster as soon as the French Army could gain the opposite bank. But, catching sight from afar of Austrian and Russian soldiers on the Quay and the boulevards (who had entered Leipzig on the heels of the French), this officer blew up the bridge whilst Macdonald's Corps and the Divisions of General Lauriston, General Régnier, and Marshal Poniatovsky were still passing through the town. Panic broke out among the troops which thus found themselves cut off. Macdonald crossed the Elster by swimming it. Part of the troops followed suit, and part surrendered as prisoners. Two hundred guns were captured by the Allies on the boulevards of Leipzig.

The disorganized French Army was hastily retreating to Lützen. Near the Rosenthal in Leipzig, there was cannon and musketry fire. The Army was marching on Erfurt . . . on the Rhine . . . to France.

Marshal Poniatovsky and the Division commanders Vial, Rochambaud, and Delmas had been killed. Marshals Ney and Marmont, the Division commanders Sougam, Compan, Latour-Maubourg, Frédérick and Maison were wounded. Régnier, Lauriston and the Division commanders Charpentier, Rosnitzky, Krassinsky, Hochberg, the Duke of Hessen-Darmstadt, Aubry, Bertrand, Dorsennes, Coulomy, Bronikovsky and Mala-

kovsky were prisoners of war. . . . About twenty thousand men had been killed, seven thousand were wounded, and about twenty-three thousand were prisoners of war. About a third part of the Army had remained on the fields of Leipzig.

Napoleon was retreating to France . . . to France which was to rise as one man to defend her frontiers.

But what defenders could France give him? Youths? Children? . . . And where was he to get new generals and marshals from, the "lieutenants of the great captain," who should replace those who had been killed, wounded, or taken prisoner? Moreover, would France remain loyal to her Emperor after this second disaster?

Gray clouds were settling over the mountains. They hung like shaggy caps above the dark fir woods. The rain poured down, hiding the road from view, then stopped for a short while, and then a grayish-white, thick fog rose in the valleys. Through the waves of this fog, the endless columns of the infantry, artillery, cavalry, and wagon-trains showed dark, dull, and dim, as they splashed wretchedly through the mud of the trampled, deeply rutted roads.

These rainy autumn days engendered a feeling of melancholy, of grayness and of anxiety, in the heart of every soldier. And the same thoughts were in the mind of each and all of them.

Thoughts about peace.

VII.

For the part he had taken in the battle of Leipzig, near the village of Gossa, Cornet Kouzma Minaieff was promoted to lieutenant, and furthermore received the Cross of St. George, 4th Class, "for having," in the words of the award, "been the first to hew his way into the ranks of the enemy's cavalry," and having "in a hand-to-hand encounter laid one of their senior officers low."

It was a joy to Kouzma to receive the small white cross

so long yearned for, but, at the same time, his soul was filled with great misgiving. On weighing and appraising what he had done, Kouzma became convinced that he had done nothing heroic, and that he had in no wise earned the distinction awarded. He had merely done his duty. He had not dashed to the attack alone on his own initiative: the entire regiment had been ordered forward by the Emperor's will. There was also nothing remarkable in having been the first to pierce the enemy's ranks, since it was an officer's duty to go first and to give his men an example. And he had only run the enemy officer through because the latter had exposed himself to attack. Had he, Kouzma, been in the first troop, that officer would have ridden by.

The more Kouzma thought the whole matter over, the more painfully evident it became that, although the St. George's Cross had been awarded to him, he was unworthy of wearing it. There was time enough for these reflections. His regiment, on which the Emperor had lavished favors, was still acting as His Majesty's escort, and was slowly continuing its onward march in the direction of Switzerland, where it was assumed that they would cross the Rhine.

Kouzma even thought for an instant of returning the Cross, with the statement that he considered himself unworthy of so high a distinction. But he did not dare to do this. There was no disputing an honor the Emperor had deigned to confer; his Imperial will was law. Nevertheless, the thought of his unearned decoration gave Kouzma no rest. It seemed to him that the right to wear this white cross must be bought by much suffering and tribulation. There could be no great exploit without its crown of thorns. His soul revolted at the thought of easy laurel-bays of victory, with never a thorn.

Although Count Panin, of the Horseguards, whom he had known in Maria Alexéevna's house in St. Petersburg, and with whom he had grown to be very friendly during the campaign, and Evgueny, did their best, they were unable to soothe and reassure Kouzma. His mental perplexity and disturbance did not cease, and he did not sleep at night whilst imagining such valorous deeds, such exploits, as he himself would deem worthy

of reward. It would, for instance, be fine to get onto Napoleon's track. . . . To watch him night and day, taking neither food nor rest, shivering beneath this eternal rain; then at last to kidnap him and bring him before his own sovereign. And somehow to get so badly wounded in doing this, as to fall dead at the Emperor's feet. Yes, that would be a deed worthy of the St. George's Cross!

Whilst so thinking and dreaming, Kouzma quite forgot that a dead man could earn no reward. But, in his opinion, the life of a hero did not end with bodily death. Although the arms of Nadenka his wife would not enfold him on this earth, yet on the Other Side his father would meet him, and his brother Ivan, as well as the mother he loved all the more because he hardly remembered her. And the Lord Christ would meet him too, and His Immaculate Mother. . . .

When the regiment arrived at Basle, the Emperor Alexander issued a manifesto regarding the transference of the war into French territory. Kouzma read and re-read the Imperial rescript, turning each word over in his mind, in the hope of being able to glean from it some hint, some idea of how best to obey the Emperor's will, and how to accomplish some real exploit, something worthy of the St. George's Cross.

"Warriors!" began the manifesto. "Your dauntless courage and resolution have led you from the Oka[19] to the Rhine. They will lead you still further, for we are crossing over into the confines of that land with which we are waging a sanguinary and relentless war. We have already saved our Motherland and added to her glory, and have re-conquered peace and independence for Europe. It now remains to crown this great achievement by the peace all men long for. May calm and tranquillity return to the whole troubled world. May each kingdom thereof prosper under its own government, dominion, and laws. May religion, language, science, the arts, and commerce flourish in all lands, to the general welfare of mankind. This, and not the continuance of warfare and desolation, is our aim.

"Having penetrated to the heart and center of Our Empire,

[19] An affluent of the Volga.

the enemy wrought us much evil, but suffered a terrible doom therefor. God's judgment smote him. We shall not imitate his actions, for a loving and merciful God cannot brook cruelty and savage deeds. Let us forget what he has done, and mete out to him neither revenge nor ill, but offer friendship and a hand outstretched for reconciliation. It is Russia's proud boast and fame that, once she has conquered the mailed foe and has wrested his weapons from him, she wishes him and his peaceful countrymen naught but well. We are so taught by the holy Orthodox Faith we reverence. In the words of the Godhead, it teaches us to 'love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who despitefully use us.'"

"Warriors! I am firmly convinced that, by your good behavior on enemy territory, you will conquer the foe as much as by the sword, and by blending soldierly courage against his armed might with Christian piety towards the defenceless, will crown your many deeds of prowess by maintaining your reputation as a brave and God-fearing people. In this manner you will hasten the attainment of that universal peace which is the goal of all our wishes. I also feel confident that your chiefs will not fail to take the measures necessary for such purpose, in order that the behavior of a few of your number might not, to the grief of all, mar that good name so justly borne by you up to the present. . . ."

It was in vain that Kouzma read and re-read his Emperor's proclamation. Its every line breathed the spirit of peace, kindness, and goodwill; there was no room in it for heroic deeds compact of blood and suffering. . . . The war was inclining towards peace. Representatives of the Allied nations were, he knew, negotiating something or other with Napoleon, and, although cannon roared whilst the Rhine was crossed, and the Russian Chasseurs covered themselves with fresh glory, a deed of individual derring do was already becoming somewhat difficult to accomplish. Napoleon was far away, in Paris, and a great distance separated Kouzma from the front.

It was then that the young man heard of a plan sketched at General Headquarters, to set free the Pope, now Napoleon's prisoner at Fontainebleau. Kouzma was able to discover that

Count Platoff's Corps was destined for this mission, and resolved to write to the Ataman.

Kouzma did not come to this decision without a struggle. He called to mind a maxim of his father's, which ran: "Do not beg for duty; do not refuse duty." And now he was going to beg for it. Still, only Platoff would understand what he wanted, and why. That was why Kouzma decided to write to the Ataman.

"Your Illustrious Highness, my lord Count and gracious benefactor," wrote Kouzma. "The memory of your inexhaustible kindness to my dead Father leads me to hope that you may consider my present petition favorably. That is why I now venture to importune you with a request."

Frankly and sincerely, without embellishments, Kouzma set forth all that was troubling him, all that he feared not to find "in my present position, being attached to the sacred person of my Emperor as a member of his escort, where more heed is at present being paid to discussing peace than to the capture and destruction of miscreants." He ended by begging the Ataman to take him into his own service, "where in reconnoissances, sallies, and similar missions, I might have the opportunity of justifying my Emperor's gracious favor, and of making our chief foe a prisoner."

With the help of Evgueny, Kouzma was able to dispatch this letter by an express messenger. At the beginning of January he received Platoff's reply.

Kouzma had not been mistaken. A Cossack had understood the soul of a Cossack. Lieutenant Kouzma Minaieff was transferred into the Partisan Division under Colonel Seslavin, together with thirty Cossack privates of Melnikoff's regiment.

VIII.

On a foggy winter evening, a tall colonel with a cold, clean-shaven face, wearing a sable cap and a long Russian fur coat, received Kouzma at his "headquarters," in a wretched hut in the very heart of the huge Dère forest.

"Heark you, Kouzma Ivanovitch," he said, "you'll have to shed your cloak and your red jacket, and all the pretty Guardsman's toys you wear. Send them back to your regiment with your orderly. Yes, and your sabre as well! From now on, my lad, you must dress so that nobody'll notice you if hiding in some bushes or behind a boulder—so that a Frenchman may pass you at a couple of paces, and see nothing. . . . Gordienko!" called Seslavin into the wood.

"Gordienko present!" replied a cheery voice from the damp forest depths. Noiselessly, a breezy-looking sailor appeared within the strip of light by the camp-fire's glow. He wore a black sailor's uniform with neither buttons nor shoulder-straps, long trousers which had gone fringy at the hem and were bound round the ankle with bast, and hunting waders with holes to let the water through.

"Gordienko, you must dress his Honor up in our fashion. Have you got anything that will do?"

"All the clothing store's full of stuff, in a manner of speaking. But it will be a mite difficult because of his Honor's size."

"Well, do your best. Go with him, Kouzma Ivanovitch, and get dressed as we partisans do. Then come to me, and we'll have some field porridge together. I'll teach you a thing or two by night-fall, and send you to your post. We have been watching for 'him' for nearly three days. He's expected from Châlons in person."

Kouzma was duly disguised. When dressed up, he looked partly like a French peasant, and partly like a Russian forester. He wore a low, round fur cap, fur outwards, with ear lappets and a peak, and the waistcoat of a French peasant. A long dark Polish coat, wadded throughout, completed his new clothing. He was allowed to keep his own trousers and high boots, but was told to denude the latter of spurs. Seslavin ordered him to be given a light Circassian scimitar, to take the place of his sabre.

In what used to be a hay loft—Gordienko's "clothing store" —Kouzma saw, by the light of a candle, a large collection of French officers' uniforms, epaulettes, swords, caps, helmets, and shakoes.

"The chief himself"—Gordienko nodded in the direction of Seslavin's hut—"sometimes dresses up and goes off to their advance-posts. Nobody could recognize him . . . just a Frenchy, if ever there was one! And he speaks their language proper."

"Where did you get all these things from?" asked Kouzma, astonished at the rich choice of disguises.

"Don't we lay our hands on Frenchies every day, your Honor. Both living and dead. . . . Though, to speak the truth, the living aren't kept long; that's just as may be. . . . And they're not easy folk to deal with. Sometimes they're all round us—and, Lord! one knows at once that they're not Russian nor yet German! Betray you as soon as a wink, your Honor. A wicked lot. . . . If you aren't quick as a cat, they'll up and shoot from round a corner or fling stones. And if so be you walk into a house of theirs, they'll glare like wolves—as bad as Turks. I've seen their like in Turkey, when a prisoner in Constantinople. Ah! a man must have his wits about here—one eye this way, t'other over yonder. And now 'he' has left for Brienne town, and it's said that Blücher's Corps of Germans is there, and our Sacken with him. If not to-day then to-morrow, there'll be some fighting."

"Where did you get all that from?" asked Kouzma.

"Just as happens, your Honor. . . . But who should know, if not a partisan? Why, I've seen their Boney close as you, sir—just a mite further off, perhaps. Once—at night-time, it was. You know how he rides, may be? Two scouts in front-mounted 'chasseurs' in tall caps—then, a hundred paces behind, two more, but with pitch torches to light the way. And about thirty paces off, like this. . . ." Here Gordienko began tracing on the ground with a bit of stick. . . . "came Bonaparte himself. Easy to recognize, he is—always rides a white horse. Not a tall one, but well paced, and it'll go and it'll go, and fling the miles behind it. And with 'him' on its back. Can't be mistaken, in his gray surtout and three-cornered hat. His generals came trotting behind, but dressed all different—long cloaks, your Honor, and big hats on 'em. Plain to be seen, them being big chaps and him small."

"And you have really seen him?" asked Kouzma, his voice shaking with agitation.

"With my own eyes, and more than once. . . . Well, when Bonaparte rides along, he keeps mum mostly; but sometimes, if somebody rides alongside him, he'll talk, in their own lingo, of course, with 'dee dong,' and 'vwallah,' and 'tyang.' And me hearing it all."

"But where were you?"

As he spoke, Kouzma felt a shiver run down his back.

"Just according, your Honor. Once perched in a tree; another time flat in a ditch among dead bodies. And once hidden behind a rock."

"And you didn't capture him?"

"Just you try, your Honor! He's a bit slippery. . . ."

Kouzma lay by the camp-fire that night, but he could not sleep.

"How simple they make it all sound—'I saw, I heard, I was quite close to him.' And yet he wasn't captured. . . . That's where a man might do something worth doing."

Kouzma was summoned to Seslavin's presence. He received his orders and was instructed in his task for the following day. Gordienko was to accompany him. On returning to the camp, Kouzma lay down in a low hut, listening to the long-drawn, familiar speech of the Cossacks. Then the voices became silent. The Cossacks had probably gone to sleep. But Kouzma could not sleep. He lay with open eyes, thinking:

"To-morrow night. . . ."

IX.

THE snow was falling in one soft, damp, feathery sheet. It clung to the black branches of century-old oaks, elms and plane trees, through the dark curtain of which was visible a wide road bordered with ditches. There were black ruts all over the road, since artillery, wagons, and troops had passed not long before.

Water flowed in the ditches with an almost soundless gurgle. Cossack horses were hidden behind the trees, and seemed to know that they must not be seen. Not one of them neighed or whinnied. The snow stopped falling and a thick ground fog came down, making the night yet darker. Heavy clouds gathered at a low altitude. It was so dark that Kouzma's accustomed eye could scarcely discern his Vorontchik's ears in the gloom. Towards the west, in a curtain of mist and murk, glimmered the light of a great fire, now leaping high, now dying down. It was the town of Brienne burning. Towards the east, not more than half a mile away, gleamed the lighted windows of Mézières, the town where Napoleon had his General Headquarters.

Kouzma's party of twelve Cossacks—he being the thirteenth—had hidden in the wood since morning, watching the road and sending scouts up to Brienne, where fighting had been going on all day. Kouzma saw a regiment of French Dragoons pass at short trot on their way from Mézières to Brienne, and then watched artillery go by for a long while. The guns stuck in the muddy road, and their teams had great difficulty in dragging them out. Wet, clinging snow fell blindingly all day, and the French advance was visible through it as through a white, transparent curtain. The guns of the Russian batteries thundered from Brienne, the French howitzers booming dully in reply. Then there came a ripple of musketry fire and the sound of a Russian cheer, followed by more gun-fire. The heavy concussion shook snow from the trees, and it fell on Kouzma's face and down his neck. At about four o'clock, when dusk was coming on, the noise of battle ceased, and it seemed as though Brienne were still in the hands of the Russians. An hour, or thereabouts, passed quietly by. A cold winter's night was coming on (it was mid January), and it began to freeze. Fog swirled to the very ground in thick sheets.

Suddenly, the sounds of close, ragged musketry fire became audible from Brienne, and the guns spoke anew. Now and then, Kouzma seemed to hear cries. Yet another hour went

by. At about seven o'clock, when it had grown quite dark, quiet fell once more.

News came at last. The Russians were abandoning Brienne. General Blücher had narrowly escaped being taken prisoner. The French had actually surrounded General Sacken, who had only saved himself by hugging a wall whilst the enemy squadrons had galloped by, without recognizing him. The Russians were falling back to Trannes on their way to Bar-sur-Aube. Liaison had been kept up well, Sacken constantly informing Seslavin, and the latter sending Kouzma either a note or a verbal message.

His last note ran: "Remain where you are. The French are camping in the neighborhood of Brienne, and of the forest. Sacken is still in the town itself, but will leave during the night. Napoleon is in camp, or quite close. His quarters have been got ready at Mézières, and he must pass your hiding-place. Keep a sharp look-out."

Lights began to glimmer through the fog, beyond the wood. From its outskirts, about three miles from where Kouzma was, came the ring of axes and the dull buzz of a bivouac. In his own vicinity, however, all was silent.

Once it seemed to Kouzma that he could hear, very faintly, cries of *"Vive l'Empereur!"* But he could not be sure. . . . Perhaps it had only been fancy.

It had now become so pitch dark that, although the man was standing quite close to him, Kouzma could no longer see Gordienko. He assumed the time to be at least ten o'clock.

Gordienko suddenly rammed his fist into Kouzma's knee. Kouzma stared hard into the gloom, but could see nothing. Then he pricked up his ears.

Yes, he could hear the sound plainly now. Two riders were approaching, their horses clip-clopping through the mud. Both kept silence. These horsemen passed Kouzma at not more than five paces, yet were invisible, and continued on the way to Mézières. Then, to the left and from the same direction, came two yellow points of light which wavered in the dark, making it hard to tell whether they were near him or far off. Suddenly, it seemed, they had come quite close. They were torches,

and their gleam lighted the darkness but little. As they flickered, horses gradually loomed blackly, bearing riders wearing greatcoats. The men who carried torches were two in number, which meant that Napoleon himself would be the next to ride by.

Out of the dark, which the torch-light did so little to disperse, came the sound of voices. They were speaking French. At first it was impossible to distinguish any words, but, as the horsemen approached, Kouzma could hear one of them say, bitterly and nervously:

"I always seem to see Cossacks at spots like these."

A baritone voice spoke quietly and lazily in answer:

"This snowy wood reminds you of Russia. There can be no Cossacks here."

"Nevertheless, look over yonder, Your Majesty. I am positive that somebody is about. I see shadows. . . ."

Kouzma convulsively dug his heels into Vorontchik's flanks. The horse leapt forward, took the ditch at a splendid jump, and landed Kouzma right in front of the last speaker. Through the gloom of this foggy night, which was scarcely pierced by the torch-light, Kouzma saw, as in a dream, a small rider who bestrode a smallish horse and wore the black, three-cornered hat which sketches and caricatures had made so familiar.

Kouzma seized this rider's arm in a vice-like grip, whilst with the other he laid hold of his wet surtout. The torch shed a red light on the horseman's face, greenish fire seemed to blaze from his eyes. Kouzma heard the stifled cry of *"Aux Cosaques!"* . . . he felt a dull blow on the head . . . and then nightmare supervened. The chill of snow was against his face, sand in his mouth. . . . Everything vanished in darkness as unconsciousness descended. . . .

X.

It was, indeed, Napoleon whom Kouzma had seized in his mighty grip. Colonel Gourgaud was riding at his side, whilst

in the rear, wrapped in their cloaks, came generals of the Imperial suite and the escort. The Cossacks jumped the second ditch and vanished into the wood as quickly as they had appeared. Had it not been for the presence of the man who lay unconscious on the ground, the whole incident might have been dismissed as a strange dream, a weird vision born of this dark, uncanny night.

The Emperor shrugged his shoulders to dispel the recent, unpleasant feeling of a strange rough touch, set his hat right, turned in his saddle, and spoke to the Chasseur-à-cheval who had accounted for the daring Cossack by so shrewd a blow from the butt-end of his musket:

"Have a look over there. If that man is still alive, take him along with you."

Napoleon spent the night at Mézières. At dawn on the 18th of January, he received the report that the Russians had left Brienne, the whole of which had been occupied by the French, including the castle. A curé from Brienne made his appearance, fell at Napoleon's feet, and was recognized as a former teacher at the *Ecole militaire*[20] of Brienne. Recollections of his early youth came to the Emperor's mind and he decided to move his quarters from Mézières to Brienne, into the very castle where he had once been taught.

The fire had been almost entirely got under when the Emperor rodé through the town. Everywhere were ruins, blackened house-walls, broken windows, and wrecked chimneys. The principal square was full of prisoners and damaged brass guns, the green gun-carriages still intact, but locks gone and wheels almost to pieces. The bodies of dead Russians, Frenchmen, and Prussians, still lay about the streets. Such parts of the castle as had escaped damage were being hurriedly got ready for use. In the underground cellars, where many inhabitants had taken refuge, cooking fires had been started and the Emperor's morning meal was being prepared.

Napoleon walked musingly about class-rooms and dormitories, with which war had so hardly dealt. Their broken windows let in the wintry cold, and through them could be seen

[20] Military school.

the snow covered slopes of a low hill black with corpses. Among the latter slowly moved the town's inhabitants, whom gendarmes endeavored to hustle in their task of conveying the dead, friend and foe alike, to a common grave.

The Emperor halted near a window. Behind him stood three Marshals—Berthier, Ney, and Marmont—and Maret, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"A propos," said Napoleon to his suite generally, "is that Cossack . . . that Cossack of yesterday, still alive?"

"I shall find out immediately," said Berthier.

"If he is alive, order him to be brought in to me."

The Emperor entered the library. Here stood the tall, heavy cupboards he remembered so well, each with their load of books in bindings of yellow leather. How happy he had felt amongst them! How much wisdom he had garnered from these dusty old tomes! From Cornelius Nepos and Sallust, from the "Commentaries" of Julius Caesar, the "Anabasis" of Xenophon, or the account of Turenne's campaigns.

The cupboards had been dragged from their places and books lay scattered on the floor. Many were torn, many more were piled in a scorched heap near the hearth. Napoleon turned to the "curé":

"Who did this?" he asked. "Was it the Russians?"

The "curé" remained silent.

"It was partly the Prussians," he said at last. "Blücher's Staff occupied the castle. But mostly, it has to be confessed. . . ."

"The French," said Napoleon, concluding the phrase with sad irony. "Respect for learning unfortunately perished after the Revolution."

"The soldiers keep on looking for money," said the "curé" with bent head. "Money has sometimes been found slipped in between the leaves of books."

The Emperor stepped down to the ground floor, where accommodation had been prepared for him in the former quarters of the head of the school. Here he was kept busy until noon, himself composing a bulletin intended for publication in Paris. After this he worked in company with Berthier and the

mayor of Brienne. When luncheon was over he returned to his work-room and stood beside the hearth.

In the room were Berthier, the mayor of Brienne, the Emperor's private secretary Fain and the adjutants on duty.

"I want the castle to be repaired and put in proper order," said the Emperor, "at my own expense. There must be a military college here once more. I wish the memory of my youth not to be forgotten in France. Now everything will go well. A brilliant beginning was made yesterday. . . . But where is that Cossack, pray?"

"He has been brought in, Your Majesty," said one of the adjutants on duty.

"Who is he?"

"He has not given his name. But he speaks French and is obviously an officer."

A gendarmerie officer brought in Kouzma under escort. Face to face with a man of Napoleon's small stature, Kouzma looked especially gigantic. His temple had been cut open to the bone by that blow of the musket-butt. Somebody, however, had washed the blood off, and now a black scar showed in high relief on his drawn face, which had gone a greenish-white. His dark eyes were melancholy behind their long lashes. Kouzma's head was singing; thoughts were chaotic, and reality fought with on-coming delirium. Wearing a long Polish coat stained with blood and mud, without belt or cap, his thick hair straggling untidily and plastered with blood, he looked like some woodland vagabond. Kouzma stared at Napoleon and his head cleared.

"Antichrist did not destroy me," he thought, "therefore Christ is still mighty."

He gave a brooding glance round the work-room. With a great effort behind and in spite of that dull pain in the head, his wits began to work.

"Have a care, Kouzma! Blurt out nothing which should not be said. . . . Do not disgrace the name of a Cossack."

"Who are you?" came the question.

"A Russian officer."

"No officer would wear such clothes. An officer has a uniform. . . . You are just a marauder."

"I am not," said Kouzma firmly.

"Then why are you dressed in this fashion?"

"Because I am a partisan."

"Partisan or marauder—it is one and the same thing. . . . He is to be shot."

The colonel of gendarmerie laid a hand on Kouzma's shoulder, preparatory to leading him out. The Emperor looked at the prisoner. Not a muscle moved in Kouzma's face; only his eyes shone with a gentle light—almost as though from gladness.

"Wait!" said Napoleon. "I may perhaps pardon you, but everything will depend on your deposition. Tell me the number of Russian troops which took part in to-day's engagement."

"I cannot say."

"It will make no difference if you refuse to tell, since I know their number. There were forty thousand—the 6th and 11th Corps under Prince Shtcherbatoff and Count Lieven, Olsoufieff's 9th Corps, and then the Prussians. As you see, I am aware of everything. You had twenty-four guns. The Russians fight well, nevertheless I conquered them. . . . Yet I must confess that this victory does not redound so greatly to our credit, since we fought you the whole day long."

After a short pause, the Emperor spoke with sudden vehemence:

"See here! I may set you free, and you can tell your people this from me: To-day I have defeated Sacken; to-morrow I shall destroy Wittgenstein. On Thursday I shall aim such a blow at Blücher, that the old drunkard will never recover from it. And, in the end, I shall dictate to the Emperor Alexander, on the Vistula, such a peace as seems good to me."

"Yours will be a fairly difficult task," said Kouzma tranquilly.

This prisoner, for all his blood-stained crack on the head, seemed to have more self-control than the man in whose presence he stood. For the Emperor was obviously losing his.

"You are barbarians, you Russians! You set Moscow alight—a thing nobody but barbarians would do. . . . What a

disgrace for your nation! I have taken Berlin, Madrid and Vienna in my time, but never saw the like."

"The Russians do not regret what they did. On the contrary, they are proud of it."

"Have him taken out and shot!" Napoleon said curtly. Yet, the instant after, he signed to the escort to take their hands off Kouzma.

"How strong are the Russian Guards?"

"I do not know."

"Where is your Emperor?"

"I do not know."

"Where are Gortchakoff, Prince Eugène of Wurtemberg, Count St. Priest, and Langeron?"

"I do not know."

"Why do your men wear a white band round their arm?"

"So as to recognize their own side."

"That is untrue! The Russians sympathize with the Bourbons, and want to help a Bourbon to mount the throne once more. . . . But this will never happen. France will not accept the Bourbons. She hates them."

"I know nothing of all this."

"It was my wish to spare you," said Napoleon, "but your obstinate refusal to reply as requisite to my questions, renders this impossible. Yet I shall put you one last question. Why does your Emperor always fling his own best troops into battle, instead of those of his German allies? I'd annihilate the latter in half an hour, instead of which I have just fought you twenty-four hours on end."

"It seems good to my Emperor to do so. And for us his will is law."

"Your replies are nothing but evasions. I am questioning you as soldier to soldier, and you should answer me. Remember that an Emperor is addressing you, and he orders you to speak."

"My oath to my Emperor and country forbids me to do so," said Kouzma in firm tones.

"Take him away!" Napoleon waved his hand irritably.

Kouzma was led out of the room. In a minute or two the

Colonel of gendarmerie returned, stood respectfully to attention, and asked:

"Do you give orders for him to be shot, Your Majesty?"

"No. Send him along with the other prisoners and keep a strict watch over him. A bold young fellow such as he will be an ornament to my procession of prisoners in Paris. When the time comes, our papers can mention the Cossack who tried to capture Napoleon. It will be rather amusing!"

XI.

SPRING came round again. On the 23rd and 24th of February, winter took a final leave with sudden violent snowstorms. Those were the days when, at Craon, the Russians under Count Vorontzoff covered themselves with imperishable glory, and when the 19th Russian Chasseurs vied with the Shirvan Regiment and the Mariupol Hussars, with Melnikoff's Cossacks, and the Russian artillery, in valor, routing the French under Napoleon himself. The history of these days is a record of Russian heroism. With all its cartridges gone, the Shirvan Regiment thrice bayonetted its way, drums beating, through the encircling French. Among the frozen clods and hummocks of snow-laden ploughland, Major-General Poncette took his stand on crutches in front of his brigade, looking like some strange, distorted statue. Twice he was ordered to retire.

"I'll die here, rather than move one step!" replied the crippled general.

General Vouitch, his Divisional Chief, then rode up. On receiving the same answer, he said:

"If you wish to die here, you personally are free to do so. But I order the Brigade to retire."

The whirling snow blocked up gun-barrels and flintlocks became useless. Eight times did the Mariupol Hussars attack, losing twenty-two senior and subaltern officers—almost the whole of their regiment.

Lanskoy and Oushakoff, those dashing cavalry generals who

managed to look dandified even during an engagement, died of wounds on the battlefield. Lanskoy refused to have his leg amputated. Oushakoff, though mortally wounded, got in the way of his regiment as it retired, waved his sabre with a cry of: "Courlanders, stand fast!" and fell dead.

The battle of Craon was Napoleon's swan-song. He would have been absolutely and finally defeated, had the Russians been helped by their Allies. But neither Schwarzenberg nor Blücher made any haste in such weather to reach the exhausted and outnumbered Russians. It was only on the following day that Blücher came up, inflicting considerable losses on the French Army near Laon.

Time went by. . . . The warm March rains pelted down, washing from French soil that white, hibernal pall which accorded so ill with it. Green winter crops and black ploughland were laid bare. Blue rifts appeared in an erstwhile gray sky, and through them shone the sun. With his radiant glance he swept the earth all pitted with lunettes and redoubts, all cut about with palissades, and foul with the reek of dead men and horses. And his bright rays seemed to say that the time had come to make an end.

This soundless call, these warm rays, at once sank deep into the French Army's soul. Suddenly and all together, everybody knew that they were weary; weary the marshals and generals, weary the officers. There was nobody to encourage and inspire the young conscripts, and only the old soldiers continued without a murmur to fight and die for their Emperor.

Together with this spring-time weariness, when men longed for their hearthstone, their fields which called them to the plough, ran secret whispers that peace would never come while Napoleon was at the helm. Then, ever louder and louder, the word "abdication" made itself heard. Why should all perish because of one? Here and there white standards floated, the noble owners of chateaux openly wore the badge of Louis XVIII. . . . In ever widening ripples spread the rumor that the Count d'Artois, brother to the King, had already joined the Army of the Allies.

With his wife and daughter, the Marquis de Choisy sud-

denly left Paris for his country seat. Immediately after his arrival at the Chateau de Choisy the Marquis called the neighboring nobles together, at the same time inviting his friend de Girardin from Rambouillet.

This meeting was duly held at Choisy, behind closely shuttered windows and drawn curtains. The corners of an enormous "salon," which was but dimly lighted by one five-branched candlestick, were all shadowy; on its walls, ancient suites of armour shone with a faint gleam. The Marquis entered wearing a powdered wig, an ample coat of crimson velvet, knee-breeches of pleated silk, long hose, and buckled shoes. Agitation had given a red flush to his wrinkled white cheeks. He told himself that, for the second time in his life, he was taking a decisive step—and again being the first to take it. Yet what had succeeded fourteen years ago might not succeed now. He knew he was playing a dangerous game, but an inner voice whispered that, if a decision had to be taken, now was the time to take it.

Before leaving Paris, the Marquis had spoken to Talleyrand, Prince de Bénévent, and that old fox (who was never wrong) had hinted darkly at some steps taken for the salvation of France. Salvation from whom? From the Allies, or from Napoleon? One could not put a question; one had to understand. And the Marquis had understood that Napoleon was meant. That same evening, without a word to anybody, he had left his post at the Tuileries and made for his Chateau.

Five noblemen who were proved royalists were present at the meeting. "They will never betray me," thought the Marquis. "Moreover, the time is such, that it is hard to say whether it is more dangerous to hatch plots—or to betray them."

With a gesture, the Marquis invited all to be seated. High-backed chairs were pulled up to the table where the candelabrum stood, and the guests took their places. Still standing, the Marquis took out of his pocket a white silk kerchief, shook it quickly open, and, after the manner of a conjuror, threw it on the table with a deft movement.

Golden lilies were embroidered on the kerchief.

The guests started from their seats. De Girardin upset his

chair and stood staring, black eyes goggling in his red face, over which had spread a flush of apoplectic hue. Monsieur de Villiars, a much younger man, of about forty years of age, wiped away the sweat from his brow with his hand and spoke in a choked voice:

"What does this signify? Treason."

All were silent. Hurried breathing was the only sound audible. Then de Villiars took a handkerchief out of his pocket, wiped his forehead once more, and spoke:

"At a time which is so terrible for France. . . . When the enemy is almost under the walls of Paris. . . ."

There were tears in his voice as it broke off.

"Don't talk twaddle," said de Choisy dryly. With the palm of his hand, he smoothed the gold embroidered kerchief that lay on the velvet table-cover. "That style is suitable for the Emperor's rescripts and bulletins, but not for use by noblemen of the ancient lineage of Royalist France. Treason? Towards whom? Towards a madman who, for the sake of his own ambition, is ready to compass the ruin of his native country?"

"But you were the first . . ." began de Villiars.

The Marquis de Choisy interrupted him sharply.

"Yes, I was the first—and am proud to remember it. I was the first to come to the man who ended the Revolution. And I served him faithfully. I served him because it was impossible, at that time, even to think of the return of our beloved King to the throne of his fathers. The nation was not ready for it."

"You think it is ready now?" asked de Girardin, who had recovered his self-possession.

"Yes, it is ready. These terrible wars, these impossible heavy taxes, these unending demands for more and yet more sacrifices, have brought the nation to the last limit of its endurance. It would now welcome any form of government which would put an end to the war, and allow it to pursue the works of peace. . . . You hear me, gentlemen? Any form!"

"King Louis XVIII is old," said a dim-eyed little ancient man, who owned the Chateau de Brunois.

"No older, Vicomte, than you or I. He is old? So be it!

But rich in experience, and knowing how to show kindness to all. That is just what we need at present."

"But he is ill!" cried de Villiars. "He is so crippled with the gout that he can hardly walk. He cannot even ride a horse."

"That is unnecessary. There has been quite enough caracoling!" said de Choisy. "The French have ridden all round Europe—and to what purpose?"

"Finally, everybody knows that he has an old man's weaknesses. He is a glutton."

"France can afford to feed one King. That will be much cheaper than feeding deputies by the hundred."

"But, after all, what proof have you that the Allies would be well-disposed towards the return of His Majesty the King?" asked the Vicomte de Brunois.

"In the first place, the Emperor Alexander's proclamations, in which he keeps repeating that he is not making war on France, but on the usurper Napoleon. In the second place, the fact that all the Allies wear a white band round their arm, during a battle. That band is a badge, gentlemen, and should be taken as such," said de Choisy meaningly. And he again smoothed out the white kerchief embroidered with golden lilies.

A short silence ensued, which was once more broken by the Marquis de Choisy.

"You said, my dear sir: 'Treason'? I have served, and am serving, France, not individuals. From time immemorial, France has been represented by a King. I have served her kings. When they ceased to be and when General Bonaparte made his appearance, I always looked upon him as a step towards Royalty. He could be a member of the Directory, or First Consul, or finally Emperor—but my King, my Sovereign, he could never be. A king is born, not made. . . . And only Louis XVIII fulfills that requirement. No matter if he is old. No matter if he has a paunch, a red nose, and feet twisted with gout. His soul is that of a man born in the purple."

"I am apprehensive, nevertheless," said de Girardin. "And there is yet another question to be answered. What will France say?"

"What will France say?" repeated the Marquis. "Paris represents France. . . . And Paris will say whatever is suggested by those who save the city from the fear of enemy invasion, those who will give it a chance to live in peace, to dance and be gay. Ah! as regards gaiety, the Revolution accustomed folk to it more than any king. Formerly, only the well fed danced; now anybody is ready to dance on an empty stomach. The women and girls of Paris danced with the Royal Guard, danced with bloodstained 'sansculottes,' and danced with the soldiers of the Imperial troops. Now let them dance with Alexander's Cossacks!"

Here the tall, heavy door opened wide. On the threshold, irradiated by the light of the sun which shone in the next room, appeared Yvonne with a large tray upon which crystal goblets tinkled musically, whilst ruby-red wine glowed in a decanter.

"Why have you come?" asked the Marquis in astonishment. "Why did you not send a maid?"

"All the maids have run away to see the Russian prisoners pass. They are being sent further south. As you said two o'clock precisely, I thought. . . ."

"Off with you, little puss! It's too early yet."

The glance of the Marquis dwelt long on his daughter, watching as she carefully shut the door after herself. Then he spoke once more.

"Prisoners are being sent further south—and our maids have run out to see them off. Well, when one comes to think of it, maid-servants also represent the people. In a week, the Allied troops will be here. . . . In ten days the Emperor Alexander will be in Paris."

"That is impossible!" de Villiars almost shouted. "That will never be. . . . The Emperor will never permit. . . . Our valorous Army. . . ."

He broke off, choking with emotion.

Glancing at him, the Marquis mockingly hummed the well-known tune of *Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre.*[21]

Monsieur de Villiars stared at him in amazement.

"What are you intending to convey?" he asked.

[21] Marlborough Goes to War.

"Dieu sait quand reviendra," [22] sang the Marquis de Choisy. "As a matter of fact, *mon cher ami,*[23] our Army does not exist. One cannot call a collection of bare-footed conscripts and of volunteers an Army—which demands the presence of genuine and experienced soldiers, officers, generals, and marshals. But our old soldiers and officers sleep their eternal sleep beneath the snows of Russia—and that is our Emperor's work! There is not one of us but can recall the name of dead friends by the dozen, among them those nice Révilles, the brother and sister whom all of you have met here. Somewhere in Russia, too, lie the unburied bones of my poor Henri. . . ." The Marquis brushed away a tear. "Why did they perish? You will say: 'For France.' But it is now that France needs men to die for her—and none are now left. Napoleon has squandered and wasted the Army, just as a spendthrift boy squanders his father's inheritance. We have no Army! And I am not alone in thinking this, for I spoke frankly with some of the Marshals in Paris. They, too, are mortally weary and spent. They care for nothing now, save their marshals' batons, the estates which Napoleon took from others to give them, and their quarters in Paris. Naturally, they must not be made to give anything up. King Louis will be very tactful about it. . . . Nevertheless, I repeat that we have no army capable of defending Paris, and with Paris the whole of France. And only he whose fault it is should bear the whole responsibility."

"What do you wish us to do?" asked the Vicomte de Brunois.

"I should like to prove to the Emperor Alexander and to his Allies, at the earliest suitable opportunity, that we represent France and that our voice is the authentic voice of the French nation. There are five of us now. Let each man find another five to-morrow, which will make twenty-five. The day after to-morrow, these twenty-five must do the same. That will bring the number up to one hundred and twenty-five. And so it will go on. . . . Nothing can go wrong, and adherents will grow snowball fashion. All who are for the King will

[22] "God knows when he'll come back."
[23] "My dear friend."

wear the same kind of black hat, and white ribbon rosettes with streamers; all will have one rallying cry: 'Long live Louis XVIII! Long live the Bourbons! Long live peace!' I trust you have understood me, gentlemen. Kindly hear me out as intelligently to the end. There is no public opinion; it has invariably to be created by a minority. And, in the present instance, this minority is represented by ourselves."

At about six o'clock, when the Marquis had seen his guests off after dinner, he joined the Marquise and Yvonne on the terrace.

"*Mon père,*" said Yvonne, watching the dark cloaks of the cavalcade disappearing down the avenue, "is it possible that the Allies will take Paris and that Cossacks will get in there?"

"That's as may be, my child. But what does it matter, since it won't last long? The 'sansculottes' were worse."

"But the Cossacks eat little children, and—and. . . . Oh! it's a dreadful thing, but they eat tallow candles."

"What nonsense you're talking, Yvonne! It is true that our 'sansculottes' in Paris did, once upon a time, tear the body of the Princesse de Lamballe to pieces and ate her heart. . . . But what's this about Cossacks? How have you come to fancy that they eat children or tallow candles?"

"I've only heard about the children, but I'm quite right about the tallow candles. Yesterday I threw a couple of them to the Cossack who was locked up in our cow-shed nearly two months ago, and he ate them! I saw it with my own eyes through the top ventilator, and nearly fainted. Ugh! simply disgusting. . . ."

"Why did you do anything so silly? You should not have poked your little nose into what doesn't concern you. . . . If you wish to know, that Cossack is being starved to death."

"Being starved to death!" stammered Yvonne. "But why?"

"So as to kill him off, of course. It's the simplest way—no guard necessary, no responsibility if he should run away. And when one is hungry, my dear, one doesn't stop at eating tallow candles. Now enough of the subject. . . . Be off into

the garden, to the fir trees at the very end. You know those I mean? Just see if the crocuses are out, and gather some for your mamma."

XII.

YVONNE walked along a gravel path that circled the chateau, made for the lake, and, without reaching it, slipped between some wide-branched firs to a round, open space on which a big swing was set up between posts. Here the dark earth was still damp and sticky. A charming glimpse of the big white house on its knoll became visible through the interlaced branches of the fir-trees. Delicate but springy crocuses, of a lilac shade, grew under the trees in three close groups. Above them the prickly mahonia spread its evergreen leaves, which looked as though made of iron. The crocuses seemed shy at being the first to appear at the ball spring gives to the flowers. Their transparent stalks, white and frail, stood upright, whilst their tender blossoms were like little blue bells.

Chirruping birds were holding the usual evening session in the treetops. Yellow tomtits, with a cap of black or pale blue, cocked their heads at Yvonne through the branches. A clumsy pinkish-gray shrike, short of tail and long of beak, hopped along a sandy path. Overhead, finches were piping to one another in short, seemingly questioning snatches. Tender, fresh, and radiant, spring sang and shone around so sweetly, that Yvonne stopped short, pressing a hand to her heart.

"How lovely!" she whispered. . . . Then an unpleasant memory smote her. "And that Cossack is dying of hunger—he can't see that beautiful spring has come."

Yvonne bent over the crocuses. She loved Nature, and felt how every vein of her body, every drop of her blood, rejoiced at the re-awakening of the earth's life. She touched the cold, frail flower stalks, then let her hands fall.

"How dreadful it must be to starve!" She remembered how, when she was very young, and her people had been "émigrés" abroad, all of them had had too little to eat for a while. That

had not been starvation, but nevertheless. . . . And this man was actually dying of hunger. He was so huge . . . possibly that would make his suffering even worse.

Yvonne felt with her hand the long, oval basket she had brought to put the flowers in.

Yes, it would slip through . . . if one bent the handle and squeezed the sides, it would go through the cowshed ventilator. "I must tie a string to the basket and hold it over the edge, then slip in a bottle of milk. . . . There was veal left over from dinner, that I know . . . and bread . . . and cheese. . . . All these things must be packed into the basket one by one, and then lowered. . . . How about including a knife? No; a Cossack shouldn't be given a knife; it might be dangerous. Let him eat with his fingers—as he and his people probably always do."

Paying no more heed to the crocuses, Yvonne snatched up her basket and sped to the underground floor of the chateau, where the kitchen was. She packed the basket with provisions, walked down a wide avenue and past cherry-trees covered with swelling buds, came to the gates of the kitchen-garden, and turned to the right along a fence. Then she ran down an overgrown path which skirted the big stone cistern, with water gurgling out of its stone pipe, and finally reached the high wall of an old cow-shed. A ventilator was let into it about fourteen feet from the ground. A ladder lay on the path. Yvonne herself had brought it there, so as to have a look at the imprisoned Cossack. Leaning it against the wall, the girl climbed up with an empty basket, having laid its contents on the ground. Then, with a hand shading either side of her face, she peered through the ventilator.

"He's asleep!"

Tying a string to the basket and bending it together, she managed to stuff it through the opening, tied the free end of the string to the ladder, climbed down to fetch the bottle of milk, climbed up again and laid the bottle in the basket. So, climbing lightly and easily up and down, her heart beating hard but happily, she filled the basket in a few journeys. Then she lowered it gently down by its string.

Yvonne now began to watch the Cossack, who was still asleep. Light filtered into the cow-shed from the side facing the girl, through a long, narrow, barred window above a heavy door. In front of the latter, there was always a gendarme on duty walking up and down. The setting sun shone through this window, throwing the shadow of its frame and bars in well defined squares on the dirty, pitted clay floor. A rosy half-light flooded some old mangers, dark with age, and a heap of rust colored straw.

On this straw, near one of the side walls, a man of immense stature lay on his back. He was covered with a torn cloak which must have belonged to some French soldier. His thick hair, which had grown almost down to his shoulders, spread over the straw like a lion's mane; his face was pale and drawn. On his left temple showed a dark scar, smeared with long congealed blood. This scar did not disfigure the handsome young face, but only gave it a grave and stern expression. A short chestnut beard curled about the white cheeks and chin.

Then—either because he heard the tiny sound of Yvonne's basket against the ground, or because he vaguely felt somebody's eyes upon him—the Cossack woke up.

Yvonne saw a pair of fine eyes, dark brown and large, open unexpectedly. The long lashes which shaded them gave these eyes an air of child-like frankness. As they lighted up the Cossack's face it immediately became handsome, candid, and kindly. Catching sight of the basket, he started, threw a glance at the ventilator, and evidently understood what had happened. . . . He made a great sign of the cross.

Lightly and quickly as a squirrel, Yvonne jumped off the ladder, laid it against the wall, and ran home. Branches of lilac whipped their swelling buds about her burning cheeks. Her heart beat fast and tears kept coming into her eyes. She had never felt so gay, so happy, and so elate. . . .

"To-morrow again," she thought; "and I'll add a bottle of wine—and take the food every day. . . . And then I'll help him to escape. Let him fly away like a bird to its nest, for he must have people at home. . . . And his mother must be waiting for him, just as mine waited for our poor Henri."

XIII.

THE first days of Kouzma's captivity had sped by strangely fast. The wound he had received made his head ache, and so thought was foggy and indistinct. He had been taken along in a heavy cart under escort, sometimes losing consciousness from the intolerable pain caused by jolting against stones or among ruts. It was only after being flung on a heap of mouldy straw, later on, that he had been able to rest and to sleep properly, and that his wound had begun to heal and to dry up. Then it was that time crawled with weary slowness, giving ample opportunity for oppressive and maddening thought.

A prisoner. . . . These two words had, for Kouzma, an inexpressibly bitter and even shameful meaning. He had, it was true, been captured when wounded and unconscious. But he had not achieved death whilst attempting some heroic feat—nor had any such feat been achieved. It was just plain captivity, nothing more.

Kouzma felt very weak. He was given hardly any food at all, and waited for whole weeks for a crust of dry bread. He had had nothing to eat for the last twelve days, with the solitary exception of two tallow candles thrown by some invisible hand through the ventilator. Those he had devoured with relish.

As time dragged endlessly by, he lay day and night on the straw, turning over and over in his mind anything that might explain his position to himself, and perhaps justify himself in his own sight.

First came the question as to where his guilt lay. For he felt himself guilty of not having heeded the warning contained in his father's motto: "Do not refuse duty; do not beg for duty." He had begged for special duty—and God had punished him for doing so.

Yet had he, nevertheless, achieved his object? Was there any exploit to his credit?

Frankly and in all fairness, Kouzma had to reply in the negative. Since he had not captured Napoleon, there had been

no exploit. But why had no capture taken place? The answer was clear and simple. Because he, Kouzma, had been wounded and had lost consciousness. The Cossacks who had been with him had not supported him, and he could not achieve his object alone. Yes, all this was quite true. But, in any event, Fate had not permitted the brilliant exploit of which he had so often dreamt, and his portion instead was a stone prison in this old cow-shed, together with cold, hunger, and rags in place of the clothes which had been taken from him. . . . And he could see no way out.

When these thoughts had brought Kouzma next door to despair, he remembered yet another saying of his father's: "If dire want or a prison comes your way, accept them in all humility." Well—here was the prison, here was hunger and suffering, the crown of thorns that he had asked for, in order to justify having received his St. George's Cross for that short affair at Leipzig.

Well, even assuming the truth of all this, where was the exploit that should have been?

A worthy exploit should invariably, in Kouzma's opinion, be crowned with victory—or death. If victory was not achieved, then death must ensue. Since, however, he had remained alive without victory and without having achieved his object, there had been no exploit worthy of that name.

Kouzma had marked off the days of his captivity on a wooden post in the cow-shed, using his strong, over-grown thumb nail for the purpose. He remembered that he had been made a prisoner on the second anniversary of his wedding-day, the 17th of January, but could not accurately recollect how many days had gone by in Brienne and on the way here. Still, his imprisonment must have begun on or about the 22nd of January.

Nine upright strokes brought him to the end of January; twenty-eight crosses gave him February. Now the month of March had begun. And to-day, the 5th of March, had come about the first happening that broke the monotony of Kouzma's slow progress towards death.

Having fallen asleep during the afternoon with the heavy

slumber of starvation, the knowledge that he was being watched roused him. Opening his eyes, he saw a basket on the ground under the ventilator—and in that basket was food. He crossed himself in sheer thankfulness and joy.

Nevertheless, Kouzma did not believe the evidence of his eyes at once. He had already had similar visions when light-headed from hunger. . . . For instance, sometimes he saw a loaf of bread before him—such a splendid loaf! With a dark brown crust, and such a savoury odor of baked dough all rye flour and caraway seeds. And so solid looking, that he'd stretch out his hand to grasp it. Then the loaf would disappear, and he would find himself clutching nothing but mouldy straw. Well, the same thing would happen now.

It was almost dark in the shed, which meant that evening was coming on outside. The square of sunlight coming from the window no longer lay upon the ground. . . . A knock sounded from behind the wall where the ventilator was. Kouzma crawled up to the basket and made a snatch at it with both hands—and this time nothing vanished. He really and positively held a basket, the very image of one in which Nadenka liked to keep her needlework-embroidery, balls of wool, and little boxes full of beads.

Kouzma began to eat ravenously, washing the food down with milk.

Who could have done this? It couldn't have been Nadenka? Or was the whole thing a dream, from which he would presently awake?

Kouzma ate, holding the basket with both hands in between bites, and fearing the dream would end.

Of course it had been a dream.

When Kouzma woke late the next morning, there was no basket on the ground below the ventilator. But, strangely enough, he felt that his hunger had been appeased, and this feeling remained.

The dream was repeated, however, and did not seem like a dream. In the afternoon Kouzma, who was not asleep but

on the watch, heard light footsteps on the outer side of the wall. There came a bump which seemed made by wooden poles. Then a basket began to squeeze through the ventilator; it came quite through and hung there. . . . A white hand made its appearance as well, laid a bottle, some bread, and a piece of meat into the basket. . . .

God had had mercy on Kouzma, and now someone began to feed him twice daily with plenty of nourishing food. He did not know whether it was an angel from Heaven, or some fairy out of French stories such as Mademoiselle Marjandi used to tell during his childhod. Whatever and whoever it was, this unknown friend snatched Kouzma from the grave. His blood began to course gaily and strongly through his veins, so renewing the work of thought. Kouzma no longer lay for days together on his straw, but walked up and down the cow-shed, thinking how best he could make his escape. For escape from captivity, being an enterprise fraught with danger, was the only means of justifying himself in his own estimation.

"I must hide the bottle," he said mentally, "instead of putting it back into the basket. . . . Then I must break it carefully, so as to make a sort of spade to dig with all night through. And I'll cover the hole with straw."

He now had an object in life, an undisputed and clear task before him. Kouzma's eyes took on their former light at the thought.

"To-morrow I'll pray God to help me," he mused, "and start work."

His strength had entirely returned during the last ten days. The healed wound on his temple had shed its scab, and only a painless, though rather deep scar remained. That would never go away.

During the night thunder began to roll, peal after peal. Kouzma lay listening intently. Perhaps this was the sound of guns, and not of an early spring thunderstorm? But could it really be so? Kouzma called to mind all that had gone before, and tried to deduce things correctly. In January the Russians had been retreating; Bonaparte had again taken the upper hand. . . . But fortune might, by now, be favoring Kouzma's

countrymen. During this mental argument the distant peals of thunder, whether celestial or terrestrial, came to an end.

Day broke. He would have to start digging that night. He had thought of and prepared everything. The angel or the fairy—whichever she might be—had paid no attention to the fact that the bottle had vanished. A fresh one had appeared in its place.

As evening approached, a good deal of noise drifted from the near-by village. Cattle were being driven at an unusual hour. Cows lowed and sheep bleated. The wheels of heavy carts creaked and rattled. Voices cried out confusedly, and their cry held fear.

Kouzma listened intently. . . . What was happening? Had a fire broken out?

At the sunset hour, when the slanting rays which fell through the barred window began to play with their motes, and when ruddy reflected squares shone on the ground, silence fell—unusual and absolute.

Suddenly a youthful feminine voice became audible outside the door, followed by the gendarme's agitated reply:

"Ah, diable. . . . Mais je m'en fiche de votre cosaque!" [24]

A key turned in the lock; bolts were drawn. Kouzma flung himself against the door, which gave way under the heave of his shoulder and opened wide. Dizzily, he halted on the threshold.

The gendarme was moving rapidly down the road, which looked all transparent in the spring dusk. Almost running, and without turning his head, he made for the church.

Right in front of the cow-shed door stood a small donkey, pinkish-white and with slender, frail little legs that appeared to be made of china. He was harnessed to a tall cabriolet, which looked enormous when compared with his tiny self. In the cabriolet sat a girl wearing a blue frock and a white shawl, and a straw hat with big feathers. It seemed as though the girl's weight might at any moment pull the little donkey over backwards, with his china legs in the air. The whole turn-out gave one the impression of being a child's toy, and the girl herself might almost have been a big doll.

[24] "Devil take it! I don't care a damn for your Cossack!"

Dazzled and bewildered by the light and by his unexpected freedom, Kouzma suddenly staggered. For an instant he thought that Nadenka sat in the cabriolet.

No, it was not Nadenka.

Big greenish-blue eyes gazed at him from under the wide, floppy brim of the girl's hat, which was tied down over her ears by a pale-blue ribbon. Agitation and fear were on the charming, rosy face.

"Run away quickly, Mr. Cossack!" she cried in French.

Kouzma stood where he was, without moving, drenched in sunlight. His chest expanded, drinking in the fresh air. As yet, he could neither realize what had happened nor collect his wits.

The girl pointed with her whip across to some fields in the far distance, where a thin cloud of dust was rising. The red beams of the setting sun, shining right upon it, turned this cloud to gold.

"Ah, mon Dieu!" she cried. "What am I to do with you? Can't you run when you're told? All the people in the village have run to the woods to hide—there'll be nobody to catch you. Nobody is going to worry about you now."

Kouzma just stood and looked at the girl, then at the distant sunlit vista, where, as in a dream, he saw the silhouettes of Cossack horsemen bent forward in their saddles. Everything seemed so strange and wonderful—just like a fairy-tale.

"Mon Dieu! why stick there without moving?" cried the girl. "Oh! how unfortunate—he doesn't understand French. . . . *Suavez-vous! . . . Vite! . . .*" [25]

There was real despair in her Parisian accents.

"Mademoiselle," choked out Kouzma at last. "What has happened? To whom do I owe my liberty?"

Not replying at once, the girl whipped the little donkey up, and the cabriolet rolled off along the dusty road towards the church. Then her rosy face turned towards Kouzma, and the girl cried loudly:

"The Russians are at the gates of Paris!"

[25] "Run away! . . . Quick! . . . "

XIV.

It was a glad, brilliant March morning.

The country through which the Russian troops were now moving had not been touched by the war. The highway to Paris wound among broad fields, those under young winter crops showing emerald green to the right. Here and there, at cross-roads, the dappled shadow of oaks, elms, and apple-trees made a lacey pattern on the ground. To the left of the road, the river Marne glittered like a silver mirror among the fields. High above them, larks trilled. Night-black rooks flew croaking off corn-stacks, traced a fanciful pattern in the air with their wings, and then came to earth like a dark net.

Whenever the troops reached a village, they moved among stone houses, small and two-storeyed, painted pale blue, white, or pink. All looked clean and as though newly washed, and all clustered closely together. But shutters were up everywhere, for the inhabitants had fled from their villages. Beyond and behind each village came high stone walls, through the wrought-iron gates of which one caught a glimpse of parks flooded with the morning light and air, all fresh and scented, and, across wide lawns, of châteaux whose white walls were crowned with steep tile roofs. Their windows also were closely shuttered, and their owners, too, had seemingly fled as the enemy approached.

The bands played more loudly as village streets were crossed, songs rose ever louder and more jolly, and the soldiers' firm tramp beat the ground resonantly.

The Guards marched through France as though on parade. They might have been taking part in maneuvers between Peterhof, Ropsha, and Krasnoyé Sélo. Everything glittered and shone with meticulous cleanliness, from the white or black horsehair aigrettes on shakoes with a metal chin-strap, down to the well washed white trousers worn with summer kit. Every officer, beginning with the Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovitch down to the least corporal, kept a watchful eye on strict for-

mation and good order on the march, for the Emperor himself daily rode up and down among his troops.

The enthusiastic cries which greeted him hardly had time to die away in the rear, when in front would rise threatening roars of; "Hold muskets tight! Stamp your foot! . . . One-two! . . . Left! left! One-two!"

The Emperor Alexander rose at dawn, and, stepping out onto the porch of the post-station at Quincy, approached his waiting retinue. He wore the tight-fitting uniform of the Preobrajensky Life-Guards Regiment, a hat with a feather plume, buckskins, and knee-high boots.

His large, blue-gray eyes gave a general glance round. All was gay and smiling on this fine morning. Under the yet slanting rays of an early sun, bright colors showed in the full-dress uniform of his Majesty's young A.D.C.'s, in the braided Hussar dolmans of orderly officers, their pelisses swinging behind their shoulders, on the dark-blue jackets of the Lancers, with red, yellow, or white plastrons. Flanking the rest and wearing a black uniform, Prince Peter Mikhailovitch Wolkonsky, Chief of Staff of the Imperial General Headquarters, bestrode a mighty, overfed charger. He alone, for some reason or other, appeared to be out of humor, and when the Emperor gave him a look out of his fine eyes, Prince Wolkonsky dropped his own tired gray ones, the lids of which were red.

As soon as the village was left behind, the entire grand and sweeping picture of the movement of the troops unrolled before the Emperor's gaze. Leaving the road, he made his way up a low hill from which the orderly movement of columns was visible over a good distance, up to the town of Meaux itself. The Emperor watched the troops for a long time, never taking his eyes off them.

That had now come to pass on which he had laid stress as far back as the battle of Leipzig, on the necessity of which he had kept insisting on the Rhine, and which the opposition of his Allies had made it so difficult for him to attain. The Russian troops were marching on Paris. After, and because of

Moscow—Paris! To the happiness of an army leader who knows his goal is near was added a delightful, as yet undimmed, memory of what had taken place but a few days before at Fère-Champenoise. It had been the 13th of March, just such another bright spring day, with just the same sunshine. All day long they had fought the French. Towards evening, when he and the King of Prussia, escorted by a squadron of Cossack Life-Guards, had ridden in the direction of Fère-Champenoise (where their night quarters were to be), an agitated looking orderly officer had caught them up. Prince Wolkonsky had stopped him with the enquiry as to where he was going. The officer had replied that he was taking an urgent message from General Kretoff to Count Pahlen. After reading it, Prince Wolkonsky had said:

"Your Majesty, the enemy is approaching our rear at Fère-Champenoise."

"What nonsense!" the Emperor had replied with a smile. "You always see the enemy double."

And even as he remembered, the Emperor understood why the Prince was standing on his dignity now.

"Evidently, he felt offended on that occasion. I'll put things right at once!"

That same evening, the Emperor recollected, he had paid no heed to what his Chief of Staff had said and was continuing on his way towards Fère-Champenoise, when a large detachment of French infantry and cavalry had unexpectedly come up in the rear, from a wood. They had immediately been summoned to surrender, the Emporor sending his Aide-de-Camp Rapatelle and Captain Dournoff of the General Staff for the purpose, and the King of Prussia his Aide-de-Camp Tille. Instead of replying, the French had formed up in a square and opened fire; Rapatelle had been killed. The order to attack them had immediately been given by the Emperor, before whose eyes a Guards' mounted battery had raced to take up a position cutting off the enemy's line of retreat. In a heavy wave four squadrons of the Horseguards had moved to the attack, led by General Depreradovitch, while from another direction the Life-Guards Lancers and Cossack Life-Guards had galloped at

full speed past the Emperor and the retinue, followed, in a cloud of dust, by cavalry under Korff, Vassiltchikoff and Borozdin.

Looking down from his post on the hill, the Emperor now continued to call subsequent events to mind, re-living that instant when, carried away by a sudden, irresistible impulse of martial ardor, he had spurred his thoroughbred and galloped off with the Cossack Life-Guards. It had seemed to him then that green fields raced to meet him, while his charger flew softly and easily over the fresh spring grass. As in a dream, Alexander had noted the corpses of men and horses strewing the ground. Galloping on and on under the continued inspiration of this reckless and unaccountable impulse, he had only come to himself when in the very thick of the enemy square, with its heavy and acrid odor of gunpowder and sweat. Desultory firing had still been going on. Soldiers—all of them young with few exceptions, their gaiters dirty, their feet often bare—had been taking off their knapsacks and small weapons, and throwing their heavy muskets into a rattling heap, some swearing the while, others making coarse jests. Many of them had wept. Mounted on a heavy plow-horse, its saddle and white saddle-cloth clumsily put on, an agitated French general had held out his sword to the Emperor.

"You fought bravely," the latter had said in French, handing it back to him, "and it is not your fault that you are abliged to surrender. Who are you?"

The old general, his gray chin shaking, answered the Emperor with animation, in his gladness at hearing French speech:

"Ah, *mon général!* If you but knew! Could one possibly make this riff-raff fight? Can one call them soldiers, mon général?"

Here His Majesty's Aide-de-Camp Mikhailovsky-Danilevsky had ridden up, bent down to the Frenchman's ear, and whispered that he was in the presence of the Emperor Alexander, who wished to know his name. The old Frenchman had merely growled in reply:

"What nonsense! That's quite impossible. . . . Your Monarch would never personally attack infantry with nothing

but cavalry!" Then, turning to the Emperor, he had continued:

"Yes, *mon général,* I am General Pactaud, and I must confess that I have never found myself in such a position as now."

All these scenes came back to the Emperor's mind now while bands played gaily, while before him unrolled those endless columns marching, marching with Paris as their goal, and his heart melted within him. It seemed as though his breast ensouled the single, huge soul of his entire Army, that Army whose every member was ready to die for him, just as he had been ready to die for each of them, when hewing his way into the enemy square. This indescribable feeling of union, of absolute oneness, with the thousands of his marching host, was touching and sweet.

Alexander looked past the King of Prussia, who was riding beside him, to Prince Wolkonsky, who rode behind, and beckoned to him to approach.

The Prince rode up. Reining his horse in sufficiently for the retinue to come quite near and almost to surround them, the Emperor spoke to Wolkonsky:

"Je vous dois une réparation d'honneur," he said.[26] "Peter Mikhailovitch, I offended you that day near Fère-Champenoise, so now I ask your pardon before everybody."

Shaking hands with the Prince, and touching his horse with the spur before Wolkonsky had found a word to say, the Emperor rode quickly on, increasing his pace to a gallop after turning into a meadow over a wide stone bridge. What a joyful thing it was to gallop so, hearing behind him the measured, regular beat of hoofs as the retinue followed in his wake. Men of the Preobrajensky Regiment, who had halted for a rest, jumped hastily up, muskets in hand. A cheer rang out to welcome the Emperor.

"Regimental singers to the fore!" he cried gaily. "We are not far from Paris now."

He galloped on.

Quite near to the town of Meaux, they came upon the

[26] "I owe you the reparation of a gentleman."

Corps commanded by General Sacken, consisting of about six thousand men—less than one third of the number which he had led over the Rhine. Many of of the gun-carriages had plain, unpainted wheels taken from peasants' carts. Many of the soldiers wore French uniforms; many walked bare-foot. The faces of the men of this Corps, who had borne the brunt of battle, were sunburned and thin. But there was a fire in their eyes, and when the Emperor rode past their ranks, it seemed as though the very air shook with their enthusiastic shouts. Looking at them, the Emperor felt a wave of tenderness and emotion flood his heart. In that moment this motley host in warlike rags smelling of the smoke of camp-fires, of gunpowder and blood, was dearer to him than the Preobrajentzy [27] he had just seen, with their dandified attire and well kept equipment.

During the afternoon, firing broke out between the advance guard and the enemy. The French were reluctantly moving away from the forest of Bondy, pressed by the Russians at their rear.

The shadows of evening were beginning to fall, when low hills crowned by high towers came in sight beyond the village of Clichy. Montmartre lay there.

"Paris! Paris!" rolled in a mighty roar through the ranks.

The end of the road between Moscow and Paris had been reached. Before the eyes of the Russian Monarch rose—Paris.

Later in the evening, the Emperor sat on a balcony of the castle of Bondy. He was alone. The sun had almost set, and narrow bands of lilac cloud swam on a horizon bathed in an orange glow. Beyond the hills, through gaps in the surrounding valleys, lay spread the countless roofs of Paris, like an ant-heap. Here and there rose the slender spires of a church or cathedral, and the piles of palaces surrounded by gardens broke the symmetry of the streets. The wide, sinuous curves of the Seine gleamed faintly. Little by little, a fog was swallowing up the city. Having shown her lovely face, Paris now hastened to hide it from the multitude, muffling herself in a dark mantle. The light of thousands of street lanterns were beginning to glitter in a fanciful design, like so many stars. And round the

[27] Men of the Preobrajensky regiment.

city, by hill and dale, flowed the light of bivouacs in an ever-increasing, ever more threatening flood. They encircled Paris in one great ring from Seine to Marne, skirting the heights of Montmartre, Romainville, and Menilmontant. It seemed as though the air were on fire from St. Denis and as far as Vincennes itself, and the lights of the city's streets appeared to become obscured in this glare. Paris was now one dark stain, one huge and sentient being crouching in the murk. Surely one could hear the beating of its enormous heart.

The Emperor rose from his seat with a sigh. . . . A new Caesar, he stood without the walls of ancient Lutetia. From the valleys of ancient Sequana rose the vision of old-time wars, the gloomy shades of revolution. Their blood-stained, fleshless hands were outstretched to snatch at kingly crowns.

How would all this end?

Long and long the Emperor gazed into the night, in the direction where Paris lay.

"Thy will be done!" he whispered. "Not unto us, O Lord! —not unto us, but unto Thee be praise!"

XV.

HAVING eaten a campaigning lunch at the village of Noisy-le-Sec,, the Emperor Alexander, accompanied by the King of Prussia and their respective retinues, rode out of the village and took the uphill path to Romainville.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning.

Below the hill the uneven line of the Ourque Canal meandered among the short, black trunks of willows, their twigs and lesser branches red as they are in spring. Flower and vegetable gardens sloped down to the banks of the canal, while between them were muddy paths pitted with the hoofs of cattle. Beyond the canal, its red roofs and many-colored stone houses glinting in the sun, lay the village of Lavillette with flowering apple orchards, and the high belfry of its gray church. Its streets came up to the very gates of Paris. Beyond the village could

be seen the yellowish gray stones of the quarries of Montmartre. Its base was hidden by gunpowder smoke and from it came the unceasing thunder of cannon and musketry fire.

Still further on, where the outlines of valley and hill seemed to quiver in the golden haze of sunny noon, a straight, thick column of dust rose along the highroad and disappeared beyond Saint-Denis.

This dust hid the long awaited Prussian Corps under Yorck and Kleist, which were advancing towards Lavillette.

Reining in his tall horse—the one he had ridden during the battle of Leipzig—the Emperor, his eyes screwed up against the sunlight, listened to the report of an officer of the Izioum Hussar Regiment [28] who had come from Blücher. This officer had just crossed the Ourque Canal, and he and his horse were covered respectively to chest and knee with clayey mud.

The officer's head was plainly whirling with pride at being in the Emperor's presence, and the knowledge that he was making his report under the very walls of Paris. His face was so burning with excitement, with the touch of wind and sun, and with the heat of his ride, that it looked redder than his crimson dolman. From his left shoulder hung a dark pelisse.

"Your Majesty," said the officer with a broad smile, "we did not know that things would go so quickly with you, and Field-Marshal Blücher had ordered an inspection for to-day. We were getting ready for parade all night—and see what a parade it has turned out to be. . . . The troops have gone to battle in their best uniforms and with aigrettes in their shakoes."

"I am very glad that it fell out so," said the Emperor.

He touched spurs to his horse, but, on hearing childish French voices talking loudly behind him, stopped short and turned in the direction from which they came.

A long column of prisoners, escorted by Cossacks, was entering the village. It was obvious that the prisoners were very young—boys, almost children.

"What is the meaning of this? Where do these youths come from?" asked Alexander.

[28] Izioum is a district town of the government of Kharkov in Russia, and there was a Hussar Regiment of that name.

"They are pupils of the Polytechnic College," said the Cossack officer who was in charge of the convoy.

"Tell them to stop."

The Emperor rode up to the prisoners at a foot pace, and they took off their shakoes. All looked white and tired; many had dark bruises from blows received in the fight. They wore black swallow-tail uniforms, and stared shyly at the Emperor out of scared childish eyes.

"L'Empereur Alexandre. . . ." went in a whisper through the crowd.

An Aide-de-Camp of His Majesty rode up to them, and, speaking in French, asked them:

"Why were you children fighting?"

A youth whose round face was white with fear and emotion, and whose large eyes were absolutely black, began to explain in agitated tones:

"We were ordered to. . . . You see, somebody had to defend Paris. The Duke of Raguza [29] ordered us to stand to the guns. Then the town firemen came along, and some other people as well. And so we all. . . ."

He stopped in confusion. Another boy, with a torn uniform through which a thin, hollow chest could be seen, took up the tale:

"And then your cavalry dashed up on our flank. . . . We have no wish to fight against the Emperor Alexander."

With sudden tears in his eyes, the boy who wore torn clothing, spoke to the Aide-de-Camp loud enough for the Emperor to hear:

"We are scholars, not soldiers. Send us to St. Petersburg, . . . We'll teach mathematics there."

The Emperor's smiling face darkened to a frown, and he said to Wolkonsky in Russian:

"They absorb the story of our savagery with their mother's milk. They think we have no professors of our own."

He turned his horse in the direction of the hill, and spoke with irritation:

"And that is what Joseph sends against us! He was never

[29] Marshal Marmont.

intelligent nor brave—but all Napoleon's brothers are of the same kidney. . . . What are we waiting for? It is time to make an end. . . . Either Paris must capitulate, or it must be stormed. Let word be sent to all the columns that I require decisive actions to be taken."

Touching his horse with the spur, the Emperor set off for Romainville at a gallop.

The Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia remained over four hours on the heights of Romainville. The village of Lavillette defended itself stubbornly against the attackers, and firing went on without cessation in its orchards, behind stone walls, and in the very houses. Cannon roared persistently and savagely, while salvo after salvo of musketry fire shook the air. Gunpowder smoke hid the village entirely. The number of wounded returning along the road kept on increasing. A strained silence reigned among the suites of both monarchs. It was evident that, taking advantage of a good position, the French had resolved to put up a stubborn resistance.

It was getting on for five o'clock when the sound of military music and the beat of drums became audible in the lulls of artillery fire, beyond the Ourque Canal. The 13th and 14th Russian Chasseurs were attacking Lavillette—attacking just as they came from Blücher's inspection, in black parade uniforms, with black horsehair aigrettes in their shakoes and colors flying. The Toula and Navaguinsky Infantry Regiments, and the dismounted Cossacks of the Boug [80] Regiment, poured into the narrow streets of the village.

At the same time, General Count Miloradovitch took the heights of Belleville.

Paris spread out below. A mounted battery rode up the hill and thence commanded the city. Looking down one could see streets descending abruptly, and through which an orderly retreat was impossible.

Miloradovitch galloped up to the battery at full speed, smiling all over his young and animated face. He was wear-

[80] An affluent of the Don.

ing a feathery plume in his hat and a handsome gold-embroidered uniform.

"Look, my lads!" he cried. "Yonder lies the capital of the whole world, and I'm going to give it something to remember!"

Then came a shouted word of command, and the gun teams hastened to ram home missiles. . . . The brass mouths spoke; out of them came white, curling drifts of smoke, and a rumbling, roaring noise filled the streets of Paris. The bombs could be seen falling among the houses, and glass from broken windows strewed the pavements.

As though in reply to the white cannon smoke, big white flags made their appearance on the city walls and fluttered in the fresh spring breeze.

Paris was asking for mercy.

An officer on foot could be seen coming from the direction of the nearest wall. He waved a white handkerchief as he walked along, and, on reaching the encircling Russians, asked to be conducted to the presence of the Emperor Alexander. A Hussar and a trumpeter were appointed for the purpose, and he went with them to Romainville.

An adjutant sent by Count Miloradovitch was making his report to the Emperor, who listened with eyes blazing with excitement in a happy face, when Prince Wolkonsky drew his attention to the French *parlementaire* coming slowly up the hill. The Emperor made a sign to the adjutant, and the latter backed his horse from the Emperor's side.

Solemn, strained silence descended on the entire suite. All eyes were turned towards the advancing Frenchman, whose heavy breathing could be plainly heard. He was old and gray-haired, with red spots on his face and tired gray eyes. Guessing rightly that he stood in the Emperor's presence, he took off his three-cornered hat and made a low bow.

It was plain that he was not yet in a condition to speak, and all waited until he could get his breath. All was quiet to the south, and also in the direction of Lavillette. But to the north, towards Montmartre, the rattle of musketry fire and the roar of cannon grew ever louder and more insistent. The Russians were attacking Montmartre.

Such absolute silence reigned about the Russian Emperor,

that the French officer could be heard gasping for breath, as he did several times before attempting to speak.

"Marshal Marmont . . ." he began at last, "Marshal Marmont begs Your Majesty to stop all warlike activities and to agree to a truce."

The Emperor, who had been bending forward in his saddle to hear better, drew himself up. His usually kind eyes took on a steely look; his face became severe and stern.

"I am ready to accede to Marshal Marmont's request," he said, "and shall give the order for fighting to cease. . . . But on condition that Paris surrenders at once."

He paused, as though waiting to hear what the "parlementaire" had to say. The latter was silent, standing with his head humbly bent.

"Otherwise," added the Emperor coldly and distinctly, "by this evening it will be impossible to recognize where your city stood."

The Frenchman gave a start and raised his head. Great tears were rolling down his tired face.

"Your Majesty," he said in broken tones, "Marshal Marmont did not empower me to conduct negotiations in the matter. He only sent me to beg that a stop might be put to useless bloodshed."

"Where is Marshal Marmont at present?"

"In Belleville, at the borders of the village."

The Emperor turned to his suite:

"Orloff," he said, "do some more riding. Take one of my Cossacks with you, and try to come to an agreement. I do not desire bloodshed and the death of innocent folk."

Kouzma was appointed to accompany Colonel Orloff at the head of the escorting Cossacks. He had rejoined his regiment several days before, having had the good fortune to fall in with some Russian troops immediately after escaping from captivity.

Belleville seemed, in Kouzma's eyes, like some living person with a face contracted with a nervous spasm so painful, as to alter its appearance entirely.

All the houses had their windows broken. Household gear and smashed glass littered the streets, mingling with the dead and wounded. One house they passed was on fire inside, and nobody attempted to put it out, so black smoke welled thickly out of the windows at the same time as snaky tongues of flame. Under the very windows of this house, a soldier all covered with blood lay on a brightly striped mattress, and beside him bleated a white goat, which was made fast to the gate by one leg. Close by sat a woman wearing a woollen shawl, rocking a crying baby to and fro. Russian soldiers went up and down the street. Some drew water from a round stone well with a windlass, greedily drinking the water after filling their cans; others made their way to where firing was still going on.

Seeing Orloff and Kouzma, accompanied by a Cossack with a white flag fluttering on his lance, the soldiers stopped, and a whiskered old Grenadier spoke.

"Better wait a minute, your Honor. The enemy is just going to fire a gun, and won't see you because of the smoke."

At the far end of the street, where smoke drifted thick, some ghost-like figures in three-cornered hats flitted busily about a gun.

"Are they Frenchmen?" asked Orloff.

"That's so, your Honor. There'll be some grape-shot along now."

The old soldier made tracks with speed behind the house. Orloff and his Cossacks turned swiftly round the street corner. The gun went off, its noise magnified two or three times by an echo among the houses. The grape-shot whined piercingly along the street, breaking branches off trees and spraying the walls with lead.

"Now it's safe for your Honor to go on," said the Grenadier, re-appearing. "They don't often fire that gun. Seems there's not much gunpowder left."

Where the woman had been sitting was now her dead body, its head a blood-stained pulp. The baby had fallen from her arms, and lay in the road crying as before. The goat had lost a leg and was jumping about on three, making vain attempts to

get free from its rope. Orloff ordered his trumpeter to sound a call, and rode on.

Little by little, the gunpowder smoke lifted. Out of it rode an officer on a smallish, shaggy horse, followed by three soldiers on foot. The rider was that very Duc de Raguse, Marshal Marmont, who had just sent to ask for a truce. He stooped very much, owing to an old wound received at Salamanca in 1811, when he had been shot in the right shoulder and left arm. A long, reddish nose contrasted strangely with his dead-white, tortured face. The Marshal rode up to Orloff, saluting with his sword.

"I am the Duke of Raguza," he said in a voice so hoarse and weary, that the words seemed to leave his dry lips with difficulty. "With whom have I the honor of speaking?"

"With Colonel Orloff, Aide-de-Camp to the Russian Emperor. His Majesty wishes to spare Paris."

Something like a grimace distorted Marmont's dusty visage.

"That, too, is my one desire," he said. "What are your conditions?"

"All military operations to cease at once. The French troops to retire within the gates of Paris, and plenipotentiaries to be sent immediately to settle questions concerning the surrender of the capital."

His head a little inclined to one side, Marmont kept silence, as though turning over these words in his mind.

"I consent . . ." he said at last. "The Duc de Trévise[31] and I will come up to the Pantin Gate in order to negotiate. May I ask that your representatives do this as well? In the meantime, be so good as to take steps preventing the Allies from firing into Paris . . . I wish you good-day."

"Your troops will evacuate Montmartre?"

"Certainly, since Montmartre is outside the gates."

He nodded, saluting once more with his sword. The same grimace once more distorted his features.

Orloff ordered the trumpeter to sound the "Cease fire!"

"Minaieff," he said, "be off to Montmartre and tell General Langeron that the attack is to be stopped. The French are surrendering Paris."

[31] Marshal Mortier.

XVI.

WHEREVER Kouzma's way took him he noticed, as he rode along, that the fighting was slackening of itself, although no order to this effect had been given. Along the abrupt slopes of Montmartre alone did the guns roar ever more often and more loudly, while the rattle of musketry fire hardly stopped.

Behind walls surrounding the gardens near Belleville hoarse cries of *"Vive l'Empereur!"* were still to be heard, but they were confused and irregular and had no enthusiasm left in them.

As Kouzma came riding along, he saw a Russian Grenadier take aim at a Frenchman crouching behind a wall, and shouted to the man not to shoot.

Turning his gray face towards him, the Grenadier spoke:

"Just let me shoot this one fellow, your Honor! I've loaded my musket special for him."

Instead of shooting, however, the soldier obediently ordered arms.

Kouzma took the downhill road leading to Clignancourt. He heard the regular, threatening boom of Russian artillery in the direction of Clichy. The heights of Montmartre could now be distinctly seen. The yellow masses of its quarries looked impregnable. The thirty French guns which crowned them took as their target the green fields and kitchen-gardens where Langezon's Corps was deploying.

Kouzma galloped off in that direction. He had gone just half way between Clignancourt and Montmartre, when he saw ten regiments, which had been in battalion formation under the very slopes, suddenly move off with unfurled banners of yellow, white and black, surmounted by the two-headed Russian Eagle. Drums beat, bands played, a great cheer thundered forth, and the troops flung themselves at the perpendicular scarps of Montmartre. Later on, Kouzma knew that they were the Eletzk, Rylsk, Polotzk, Ekaterinenburg, Ryazan, and Byelozersk Regiments.

Cheers rolled without ceasing along the steep slope, sound-

ing ever nearer and nearer its summit. Artillery-men dragged the guns of the battery company up by hand. Those guns of the French battery which were nearer the foot of Montmartre were taken at once, then turned against the French. When Kouzma had clambered up the height in the wake of the infantry, Russian standards were already waving there and a loud cheer echoed the thunder of the guns.

Now the Russian shot fell into Paris itself, into the Chaussée d'Antin. Having hurried down, a number of infantry soldiers were already running about the streets of the city.

Moving with difficulty among the dead and dying, Kouzma at length found Roudzevitch, the divisional general, in the very thick and hurly-burly of the battle.

"What did you say?" asked the General, turning to Kouzma with a hand to his ear. He was standing close beside a gun which was shelling Paris.

"A truce has been arranged," shouted Kouzma. "An order has been issued that military operations must cease."

"Just try stopping them now!" said Roudzevitch, and galloped down the slope, towards the gates of Paris. Kouzma followed in his wake.

Fresh cheers rolled and thundered along the heights of Montmartre, but they were no longer threatening nor wild. They were triumphant and glad. Russian artillery-men and infantry, pell-mell, were turning the guns of the upper French battery against Paris.

Some isolated shots rang from houses at the city's edge, from its walls, or from the quarries, but no one heeded them now. At the open gates of Paris, a Company of Russian infantry, having stacked its arms, was sitting on the ground amid loud, gay chatter. Shakoes were flung off, uniforms unbuttoned. Russian sentries stood at the gates, and an officer was holding an animated conversation with a group of Parisians. Slightly apart, soldiers who had laid their equipment aside were bringing the dead to the edge of the quarry. Kouzma found out that Count Langeron had recently ridden by, giving orders that the dead were to be cleared away at once.

Riding in the direction pointed out to him, Kouzma found the Count in the house nearest to the outskirts. He had just taken off his hat, and was about to write his report. Kouzma transmitted Orloff's order to him.

"Very good! But it comes too late. . . . Our gallant troops have taken Montmartre by force of arms—and, since it is taken, Paris also."

Night was falling when Kouzma returned to Lavillette by abandoned villas with gardens where lilac buds were thickening. Bivouacs were scattered everywhere, in meadows and yards. Camp-fires were burning under the very walls of Paris, while soldiers clamored, laughed, and chattered near their steaming kettles, muskets stacked close by. Occasionally, Kouzma turned aside and rode by deserted streets which sloped upwards to no very great heights, whence it was possible to distinguish the red splashes of camp-fires, though not the men about them.

A smell of gunpowder and of burning hung in the air. The ground was strewn with blood-stained rags, with hats, water-cans and shakoes; a multitude of abandoned muskets, stuck into the ground bayonet downwards, caught the eye. About the whole great expanse pulsed the composite, blended roar of thousands of distant voices. Stars were beginning to twinkle in a darkling sky. The silver disc of a full moon shone in the east. Far below, in some dark garden, an infantry clarion called and was answered by another; then came the long-drawn, musical notes of an artillery trumpet. In obedience thereto the clamor of human voices slackened, abated, and at last was hushed to silence.

This absolute silence of a multitude, under the walls of the enormous city, lying all dark and fearful, was so high and solemn a thing, that Kouzma reined in his horse and bared his head.

The moon rose gradually, turning roofs to silver. Somehow, the huge, noiseless mass which was Paris now seemed darker, by very force of contrast. Close at hand, out of a garden, rose a clear young tenor voice singing the "Our Father," and its notes were instantly drowned by the voices of an unseen battalion. One after the other, numberless voices took up

the holy words on all sides. Each stretch of ground, each hill, each dale about the walls of Paris, seemed to be singing the same prayer. Soon its words could no longer be distinguished; only one deep, flowing sound—now near, now far, sinking gradually into silence—swelled and vibrated in the dark. Then, yet again, those singers whom Kouzma had first heard began to sing once more. Against a background of countless other voices, of a web of sound which grew fainter and yet more faint, rose clearly the words of another prayer:

"Save Thy people, O Lord, and bless Thine inheritance. Grant victory unto our faithful Ruler, the Emperor Alexander, against his enemies, and save Thine abiding-place by the power of Thy Holy Cross!"

Orloff could not be found at Lavillette, and Kouzma had to search long before running him to earth behind the Pantin Gate, at some empty little drinking-shop in Paris itself. The whole street was plunged in darkness, and only here three lighted windows shone yellow. Several fiacres for hire were drawn up close to the stone porch with its lantern, and orderlies held some ten horses by the bridle.

A crowd of people had gathered in one big room, where tables had been pushed aside and where common, straw-seated chairs were scattered untidily about.

At a table sat Colonel Orloff, and, by the light of guttering candles, was busy writing something on a big sheet of paper in large, legible handwriting. Near him sat Nesselrode, who had just been sent by the Emperor, and Count Parr, both wrapped in their cloaks. Standing at the dark, uncurtained window, were Marmont and Mortier. They wore shabby marshal's uniforms, and their faces looked drawn with fatigue and earthly in tint. In another corner stood some ten more Frenchmen—military officers, and civilians belonging to the Municipality of the capital. Their unfettered bearing and talk in the presence of the two marshals, and the fact that Kouzma entered without anyone enquiring as to his business, demonstrated the existence

of that slackness and absence of both order and discipline, which are the usual concomitants of defeat.

Orloff finished his writing, laid the pen down on the table, scattered sand over what he had written, read it quickly through, and rose. Marshal Marmont went up to him.

"There," said Orloff, handing him the sheet. "These are the requirements of my master the Emperor."

Marmont took the sheet of paper. Those who were talking in their corner became silent and drew closer. At a sign from Orloff, Kouzma took up a candlestick, and, standing behind Marmont, held it so that he could see to read.

Marmont began to read aloud. His voice sounded flat and hoarse, as though issuing from his throat with difficulty. He stopped short after each phrase and threw a glance at Mortier and the other Frenchmen, as if expecting them to raise objections.

"Firstly" . . . began Marmont, "Marshals Mortier and Marmont undertake, at seven a. m. to-morrow . . ."

"Which means to-day," interrupted Orloff, "since it is now past one in the morning."

"Yes, I understand," said Marmont, without looking up from the paper, ". . . at seven to-morrow to withdraw their Corps from Paris."

He broke off and exchanged a long glance with Mortier. The latter shrugged his shoulders without speaking. His face was deathly white, like that of some tragic actor. Two years ago he had been Governor of Moscow; now he was surrendering Paris.

"Secondly: no military operations to be started within two hours of the withdrawal of the French troops from the city."

Marmont was silent for a space, the others likewise.

"Thirdly," Marmont went on: "all arsenals and magazines to be handed over to the Allies in the state they were in at the time of signature of the capitulation. *Fourthly:* the National Guard and the Gendarmerie shall be detached from the regular troops and, as it may seem good to the Allies, shall be disbanded or sent to carry out police or garrison duty. *Fifthly:* all soldiers found wounded or left behind after ten o'clock in the

morning, shall be considered as prisoners of war. *Sixthly:* Paris confides in the magnanimity of the Allied Monarchs. . . ."

"Of the Emperor Alexander," said somebody from a dark corner of the room, in a low voice which was nevertheless clearly audible.

Marmont let drop the hand which held the paper, and his dull glance roved over those present. Nobody stirred or spoke. Then he laid the paper on the table, seated himself, and, hunched awkwardly up in his chair, grasped a pen. For a moment he seemed lost in thought, but finally affixed his signature to the paper in a small and illegible scrawl. After having signed he rose, and was followed by Mortier and Nesselrode. Last of all Orloff appended his signature, first crossing himself with a sweeping gesture.

As soon as the Articles of Capitulation had been signed, Orloff took up the sheet of paper and folded it carefully. Conversation became animated and general in the room.

The two Marshals hastily left the house. The wheels of their "fiacre" were heard to roll over the stone flags which paved the street.

"Let us be off," said Orloff, taking Kouzma by the sleeve.

At four o'clock in the morning, in the twilight of a pale dawn, while cocks were crowing in the village and sparrows chirped gaily on its roofs, Orloff, Kouzma, and the Cossack escort rode into Bondy.

Orloff made straight for the castle where the Emperor Alexander was quartered, and ordered the Imperial valet to announce his arrival to the Emperor at once.

The valet tapped cautiously on the door of the Emperor's bedroom.

"Who is it?" came immediately in the Emperor's voice.

"Colonel Orloff, Your Majesty."

"Let him come in."

The valet opened the door for Orloff to walk through. The Emperor was lying on a narrow camp-cot, covered with his greatcoat. He sat up, lit a wax taper at the night light, and

then lit a candle. On the wall behind him the outline of his head cast a large, round shadow. The crosses and little images he wore round his neck, jingled as the Emperor moved.

"Well, what news?" asked Alexander, looking attentively at Orloff's happy face.

"Paris has capitulated!"

XVII.

THE small castle of Bondy was full of joyous animation on this glad spring morning of the 19th of March. At its gates stood a gigantic private of the Preobrajensky Regiment [32] in parade uniform with a red plastron and broad white leather straps crossing on his breast, and a tall white horsehair aigrette in his shako. The hair at his temples, as also his side whiskers, were pomaded and waxed.

A squadron of Cossack Life-Guards was forming up in the well swept courtyard, which was laid with gravel. The Troopers' red jackets, just out of store, were clean and fresh. The long, slanting aigrettes in their shakoes waved gracefully above the horsemen's heads.

A well set-up, smart looking Cossack, wearing a long dark-blue tchekmen, a sword, and a red cap, stood by the stone porch and held the reins of Mars, the Emperor Alexander's favorite gray stallion. The horse's housings were those of the Preobrajensky Regiment; he had been cleaned and curry-combed to a hair, and it seemed as though Mars understood what the triumphs of this day were to be, for he held his small head proudly and watched the porch out of his deep, dark eyes.

Representatives of the Paris Municipality had just arrived, driving up in three state coaches bearing Napoleon's initial in gold, but drawn by four wretched horses each. As the Frenchmen alighted they entered the castle, which smelled of flowers, burnt perfumes, and of the fresh spring morning.

The Imperial retinue was assembling on the porch. Count

[32] The men of this regiment were chosen for their tall stature.

Shouvaloff stood at the door. The Aide-de-Camp of the day, Captain Mikhailovsky-Danilevsky, waited in the courtyard itself, so as to signal to the guard as soon as the Emperor appeared.

The gay, lilting music of military bands was wafted towards the castle from various directions. The Russian, Prussian, and Austrian troops were marching out of bivouac to the Pantin Gates, there to await the arrival of the Emperor Alexander, the King of Prussia, and Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Field-Marshal, who were to hold a parade.

At this instant a solitary rider in a dark tail coat, round hat, and short cloak, approached the gates of the castle at a fairly slow pace. He was pale and thin; the coat of his exhausted mount was matted with sweat. As he attempted to ride in, a sentry barred the way with a musket and cried roughly:

"Get off your horse."

The rider dismounted heavily and, leaving his horse unattended, took a couple of steps forward, walking as though almost too tired to move. His reddened eyelids were very swollen, and it was plain that sleep had not visited them for a long time. He had probably ridden a long distance through the night without dismounting.

Mikhailovsky—Danilevsky recognized the newcomer from afar.

"It is Caulaincourt," he said, turning to the suite. Then he called to the sentry to let the Frenchman through.

Followed by the eyes of the entire retinue, nearly all of whom knew him, Caulaincourt crossed the courtyard with hasty, stumbling steps, and went up to Count Shouvaloff.

"Count," he said, drawing Shouvaloff aside, "I come straight from the Emperor. Please inform your Sovereign of my arrival."

Count Shouvaloff shook his head in refusal.

"That is impossible," he said quietly. "His Majesty is leaving the castle at once. The troops await him."

Hat in hand, hair all ruffled, Caulaincourt continued to face Shouvaloff.

"But really, Count," he said in agitated and imploring tones, "I am the bearer of very important proposals. The Emperor is prepared to sign immediately all the conditions laid before him at Châtillon."

"My dear Caulaincourt, you come too late," said Shouvaloff. Turning on his heel, he entered the castle.

Caulaincourt still stood on the same spot, away from the suite. With hanging head, he stared dully at the ground. It was a pitiful sight.

Shouvaloff re-appeared through the glass doors almost at once, and Caulaincourt flung himself forward. . . .

"Well?" he asked.

"His Majesty will have a talk with you after he has entered Paris," said Shouvaloff.

Here the suite was galvanized into life, for the page on duty had run out, throwing the front doors wide. The Emperor Alexander came out—tall, well knit, and handsome, wearing the Preobrajensky uniform and a large black hat adorned with a plume. His young, fresh face seemed to radiate happiness. He halted on the threshold, bowed affably to his suite, and walked with rapid steps up to his horse. Mounting with an easy movement, he trotted over to where the Cossack Life-Guards stood. Behind him, the retinue mounted hastily and in silence.

Kouzma, never taking his eyes off his Sovereign, heard him give and receive the traditional Russian military greeting. Then the Emperor passed the castle gates and took the road to Paris, his suite following.

It seemed to Kouzma as though Colonel Efremoff gave his men the order to mount with particular solemnity. Then the whole squadron trotted after the Emperor.

How strongly Kouzma's heart beat as he rode along—rode towards Paris!

On and on, filing down a narrow street paved with cobble-stones, the Allied troops streamed into Paris. Tall houses slipped

by in a never-ending, grayish-white procession. Their windows were open, and from them hung many-colored carpets. Window-sills were strewn with red, pale-blue, and white cushions, above which crowded the faces of women with bare arms, bare necks, and bare shoulders. Straw hats trimmed with flowers or ostrich feathers, and bright silk hats from which nodded heron's plumes; golden hair, brown hair, black hair, and powdered curls; the sparkle of precious stones, and the sheen of pearls; and, loveliest and brightest of all, the living brilliance of feminine eyes, the gleam of beautiful teeth through red lips, and the charm of bewitching smiles—all these things converted the narrow, stony streets into an endless, enchanted flower-garden.

The streets were crowded with people. Feminine attire mingled with the green, purple, dark-blue, or gray tail coats, and the black and gray hats, which men wore.

From top to bottom, sunlight flooded one side of the street, a-blaze with bright colors. On the opposite side, shade softened them to the likeness of a lovely, faded tapestry, stretching as far as the eye could reach.

Then, to the gay sound of martial music, or the measured tramp of thousands of hoofs against the smooth stones, the Allied cavalry passed in endless and orderly procession. About the heads of the men, in a white, shadowy wave delicate as that of feather grass, danced the slanting, tilted, or flowing plumes and aigrettes of their headgear.

A roar of voices came from the crowd, but when the Cossack Life-Guards passed a hush fell upon it. Through the red frame of the troopers' lances, countless eyes gazed upon the tossing white plumes of the Imperial suite, and upon the tall figure of him who rode at its head—the Russian Emperor.

A woman's young voice called enthusiastically from a window:

"Vive l'Empereur Alexandre!" [88]

Instantly, a sort of thrill ran through the crowd. A forest of black hats, of gay closed sunshades, rose and waved above the dense rows of people.

[88] "Long live the Emperor Alexander!"

"Vive l'Empereur Alexandre!" came the universal roar. *"Vive les Alliés."* [34]

To the right was a church, standing slightly back from the road, to which broad stone steps descended from its porch. On them stood a group of young men, all wearing similar black hats adorned with a white rosette, and a white ribbon round one arm. As the Emperor Alexander rode by, they waved their hats and shouted:

"Vive le Roi Louis XVIII! Vive les Bourbons! Vive la paix!" [35]

The crowd took up the cry, which rolled down the length of the street.

Kouzma saw people run alongside the Cossacks, then halt once more, in order to have another look at the Emperor. What with running, and what with excitement, they spoke gaspingly.

"As tu vu? . . . Les royalistes . . . Ca commence . . ." [36]

"Which is Alexander?"

"Couldn't you see for yourself? The one on the white horse. . . . There's no mistaking him."

"There he is. . . . Here's Alexander!"

"How gracefully he bows. . . . What did he say to that old man? Did you hear, eh?"

"He said: 'I do not come as your enemy, but to restore peace and trade.' "

"Peace and trade. . . . That's well said. What did the old man say to this?"

"He said: 'We have long awaited Your Majesty's arrival.' And then Alexander replied: 'Blame the bravery of your troops for my delay.' "

"A noble reply!"

"He's noble and splendid, that Russian Emperor. . . ."

The speakers ran on. Two pretty girls of the people, their heads bare, walked close to Kouzma's stirrups.

"How well all the Russian officers speak French," said one.

[34] "Long live the Emperor Alexander! Long live the Allies!"

[35] "Long live King Louis XVIII! Long live the Bourbons! Hurrah for peace!"

[36] "Did you see? . . . The royalists . . . Now it is beginning . . ."

"Of course they do," replied the other. "Half of them are French—our 'émigrés,' you know."

She laid a hand on his knee and looked up at the young man with such a mischievous, burning glance of her black eyes, that thrills ran along his spine. Were it not for Nadenka . . . Kouzma told himself to have a care in this mad, bad great city.

"Cossack, Eh, Cossack? Do you speak French?"

Kouzma did not know what to do. He did not want to shake her hand off roughly. He felt the Cossacks smiling behind him.

"Well, why don't you speak, *mon petit.*" [37]

She gave him a slap on the knee and ran on.

Here the crowd foamed right between him and the Cossack ranks, sweeping him resistlessly away from his Colonel. A stout, elderly Frenchwoman now walked beside Kouzma, white feathers in her big hat, and he heard her say to the young man accompanying her:

"Let him reign over us. . . . Or else give us a Monarch like himself."

Behind them rose an irregular, but loud cry of:

"Vive Louis XVIII! Vive les Bourbons!" [38]

There was a parade on the Champs Elysées. The Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia let the troops march past them.

The crowd followed the Emperor closely. Parisian girls and young women begged the officers to let them mount behind them on the backs of the horses, in order to see the troops better. They knelt with their arms round the officers' necks.

Until five o'clock, the bands played marches, and regiment after regiment defiled in solemn procession.

An English general who formed part of Schwarzenberg's suite, on being asked what had struck him most in Paris, replied:

"The Russian Grenadiers."

[37] "Darling."

[38] "Long live Louis XVIII! Long live the Bourbons!"

They marched, in their glittering brass helmets, huge and invincible, shouldering their arms. Their bayonets did not move as they walked, drawn up so evenly that they looked like one compact steel line, and their firm step on the stone pavement deadened the sound of the music and the beat of the drums.

Behind them, rattling over the cobblestones, the bodies of its brass guns burnished till they shone like fire on their pale-green gun-carriages, came the Russian artillery, the proud conqueror of the great artillery captain.

The French could hardly believe their eyes. They saw well fed horses pass before them, their coats smooth and glossy. Their harness, well blackened with tar, looked quite new and their black, similar sponges moved in an equal, unwavering line.

Neither the bloodthirsty slaughter of many battles, nor the long marches over thousands of miles, had broken the iron discipline of the troops. Alexander had kept his Guard in order and intact.

When the last file of guns had rattled over the square, and the dark line of the crew had passed on their bay horses, the Emperor galloped down the Champs Elysées to the Place de la Concorde and the Rue Saint Florentin, where quarters had been prepared for him in Talleyrand's house. He had refused to stay at the Palace.

The 1st battalion of the Preobrajensky Regiment occupied the courtyard. His Majesty's 1st Company mounted guard. The other regiments of the Guard were stationed in the squares and in the streets and courtyards around. Behind the white mounted statues on high pedestals, behind the interlaced chestnut branches with swelling buds, in the wide avenues of the Champs Elysées, camped the Cossack Life-Guards.

The round cones of their tents, gilded by the rays of the sun, shone through the slender trunks of the trees. The steppe horses were picketed and stretched out their necks to the armfuls of hay brought by the squadron foragers. Crowds of smartly dressed Parisians stood around, looking with astonished curiosity at the tall Life-Guards Cossacks.

At about seven o'clock in the evening the Cossack squadrons, mounted on unsaddled horses and wearing unfastened home jackets and red caps, under the command of their sergeants, filed in long columns across the Place de la Concorde and descended to the Seine to water their horses in the river.

The Cossack Samokhotkin took off his clothes and entered into the water. He crossed himself, dived, swam for some time under the water, then came out to the surface again and stood on his legs, blinking in the sun.

"The water's warm!" he shouted. "And it isn't deep . . . See . . . I am standing!"

The others followed him, some on horseback, and some alone.

Crowds of people stood on the bank, along the quay, looking at the white shoulders, the swinging arms and the black and auburn heads of the Cossacks swimming above the water.

The chatter of gay voices, the cries and shouts of the men and the snorting of the swimming horses resounded far on the Seine.

The crowds of people on both banks grew ever thicker, attracted by the unusual sight.

The Scythians from the distant north were bathing their horses in ancient Gallic Sequana.

On the following day, which was the 19th of March, plays were announced in all the theatres. Trade was going on briskly at all the markets. The gates of Paris were open, and people were allowed to come and go freely. Russian officers were advised, if possible, to wear civilian clothes. The French National Guard had remained in Paris and mounted guard together with the Russian Grenadiers.

In their worn and patched uniforms, with sad and gloomy faces, the soldiers and officers of the French National Guard appeared to carry sentinel duty in their capital, which was occupied by alien troops. The officers were coldly polite to the Russians, occasionally fought duels with the Prussians, and openly showed their contempt for the Austrians.

The streets were crowded, but seemed quiet after the animation and enthusiasm of the first day. The Emperor Alexander was nowhere to be seen. A camp-church had been set up in the courtyard of the house where he lived. The French were astonished to hear that the Emperor had refused to appear at any balls or theatrical representations because it was Passion-Week and he was preparing for confession and communion.

On Lady's Day, the 25th of March, which was on Wednesday, before the house where lived the Emperor Alexander, there was a special parade of the Horseguards, whose Patron Saint's day and regimental fête it was. The Emperor was present at the Te Deum, passed the regiment in review, offered his congratulations, and then retired to his quarters. That same day he went to confession and received the Holy Communion.

Those of the highest dignitaries of the French Imperial Court who had openly declared their allegiance to the Allied Monarchs, were allowed to be present at the divine services in the camp-church of the Emperor. Among them was the Marquis de Choisy.

Afterwards he told Yvonne in detail how, on Holy Friday, when the *plashtchanitza*[89]—or representation of Our Saviour in the Tomb—had been carried out into the middle of the church, the Emperor took off his sword, giving it into the keeping of the Aide-de-Camp on duty, approached the Holy Image, knelt thrice before it, bowing low to the ground, and kissed it repeatedly.

"It is simply incredible, Yvonne," he said. . . . "Such faith, and such humility. He kissed the hand of a simple priest.

[89] The "plashtchanitza" is an oblong rectangular box with the image of Our Saviour lying in the Tomb painted on the top of it, the box representing the Tomb itself. On Holy Friday, there is a solemn church procession, and the "plashtchanitza" is carried out with great pomp into the middle of the church. A divine service is held before it, and every body approaches and kneels before it, kissing the image of Our Saviour. In the evening a second service takes place and the "plashtchanitza" is carried out of and round the church, then brought back to its former place, this being meant to represent the burial service. It remains in the same place until Saturday midnight Mass, when it is carried back into that part of the church behind the Holy Screen which is called "the Altar."

And how they sing, Yvonne! Like angels in Heaven! Yes, he is a real Emperor. You just compare him with our Bonaparte. For the latter, God was a question of utility, not of faith. I remember how proudly he used to walk to the Cathedral of Notre Dame or to the Madeleine . . . his head tilted. . . . What did he care for the Archbishop of Paris with all his clergy? He was the Emperor, and he looked down on everybody. But the Russians . . . Do you know, Yvonne? They say that serfdom still exists in their land. This may be so. But their Emperor is the first serf before God. . . . That is probably why God is with him. . . . It is not for nothing that the words 'By the Mercy of God' are applied to him. Those are not empty words."

During those days after the occupation of Paris, the Marquis de Choisy often visited Nesselrode and saw Prince Wolkonsky several times, telling them of his adherents' political plans, and trying to prove their utility for Europe and for France. It seemed to him that these plans were listened to more and more favorably.

"God grant we are successful," thought the old man. "Then we, too, shall have a monarch by the Mercy of God."

Up to Lady's Day, it must be said, Kouzma behaved beautifully—sat in his tent without sampling any Parisian temptations, wrote at great length to his wife, drank not at all—it being Passion Week—and went to the Emperor's camp-church to hear the beautiful singing.

On the 25th of March, he and several brother officers received an invitation to dine with the Horseguards at the well-known Procope Restaurant where Marat, Robespierre, Danton, and with them, Bonaparte—the modest, lean young artillery captain with hair coming down to his shoulders, and shining eyes—had foregathered in Revolutionary days. There, to his great delight, Kouzma at once ran against Evgueny, who had obeyed the official suggestion as to civilian dress with such good will, that he looked more like a Parisian "petit-maitre" than anything else. He wore a pale green tail-coat, a silk em-

broidered white waistcoat, flesh-colored knee-breeches, silk stockings, and buckled shoes.

Kouzma took his seat between Count Panin and Prince Serbedjab-Tiumen, next to whom sat a tall officer of the Starodoub Regiment, Yourtzeff, a well-known disciple of Bacchus, who was almost moved to tears by the sight of Russian vodka. He shouted to Kouzma to fill their glasses with it. He did so, and helped himself.

Formerly Kouzma had been able to drink heavily without getting tipsy. But now he found that the wound in his temple, though healed, interfered with his drinking powers. In a manner quite unknown before, his head throbbed and his sight grew dim after the first glass.

"I've got out of the way of it," he thought, and poured himself out another.

Unfortunately, the more wine and spirits Kouzma drank, the worse he got. A myriad of bells rang in his ears, and the long dining-room contracted and expanded all the time. "Shall I have to give up drinking, just because of that wound?" he asked himself stupidly. So he drank golden champagne at once, and cried "Hurrah!" he knew not why.

Then, opposite him, Count Rostoff, that handsome Hussar, rose and made such a delightful speech about the Emperor that Kouzma wept.

To the best of his ability, Count Panin looked after the poor, tipsy fellow. Finally, after much music and shouting, general singing, and handshakes—all this as though through a dense fog—Panin, Kouzma and Serbedjab—Tiumen drove away through the fresh March evening. Kouzma dimly understood that they entered an enormous theatre, but his head did not cease whirling, only his legs still served him. There was a lot of singing on the stage. . . . Then cries arose and a lot of Frenchmen fell upon the Kalmuck Prince, who sat imperturbably in the stalls, and began to drag him away. Kouzma and Panin, who were in a box, hurried to his assistance. . . .

Again they entered a carriage and drove off, everything around seeming touchingly beautiful to Kouzma. Driving at a walk up a steep hill, they came to some houses on whose porch

red lanterns burned dimly. The sound of loud music and of feminine voices floated out of the window, but after that Kouzma remembered nothing clearly. . . .

It was late in the morning when he awoke in an unfamiliar room, lying fully dressed across a wide bed. Soft pinkish light came through the white blinds of windows reaching to the floor. An empty bed stood against the opposite wall, and a mattress lay on the ground against the third. On the mattress was a long, blanketed figure, its head all muffled up in a blue eiderdown. From beneath this rose various snuffles and groans. At a mirror which hung over the mantel-piece, wearing civilian trousers and no coat, Count Panin was tying his cravat.

Kouzma tried to recollect what had happened the night before. He was shocked to find that his hair and hands smelled of some scented powder, and that traces of it smeared the sleeves and front of his uniform.

"Something must have taken place which oughtn't to have been," he thought.

"Count," he said, "where are we?"

"At my lodgings," replied Panin.

"I think I was as drunk as a lord," said Kouzma, "and don't remember anything. Tell me what happened, for goodness' sake!"

"Nothing particular."

"I've an impression that somebody was kicked out from somewhere. . . . Was it I or another fellow? And where was it?"

"At the Opera," said Panin, turning round. He was pale and had black rings round his eyes. "But it wasn't you they were kicking out, it was your fool of a Kalmuck friend."

The blanket above the mattress moved, and from beneath it came a grunting sound.

"What was that slant-eyed idiot up to?"

"He had bought some little musical boxes during the day, about six of them, at the arcades in the Rue de Rivoli. . . ."

"Ten!" said a voice from under the blanket.

Kouzma pointed towards it with his finger, looking enquiringly at Panin. The latter nodded in silence.

"Well," he went on, "everything was quiet as death in the Opera House, and the prima donna was singing something particularly touching. Then old Tiumen, who had musical-boxes hidden all over him—in his coat pockets, up his sleeves, and in his trouser-pockets. . . ."

"And in the slack of my trews," interrupted Tiumen. But he did not make use of an ultra-polite term to indicate where the musical-boxes had been hidden.

"The Prince," went on Panin, "set all the musical-boxes going, and they tinkled out all sorts of silly tunes. Tiumen—he was in the stalls, you know, and we in a box—sat there, drinking it all in. . . . At first nobody could make out where the music came from—then they understood! There was a rush for Tiumen, and he was dragged out of the theatre."

"Went by myself. . . . Nobody dragged me!" said a voice.

The shrouded figure on the floor tossed off its blanket. A round, black, shaven head came into view, then a face with narrow, slanting eyes.

"I call Paris stupid!" said Tiumen. "Got its own opera, so can't I have mine?"

"Well," said Kouzma gloomily, "what did we do after that? I think we drove off somewhere and there were a lot of women about . . ."

"Quite right," replied Panin. "From the Opera we drove to the boulevards and then to rather a gay place."

"Count," said Kouzma sternly, flinging himself off the bed, "speak the truth now, on your salvation! Did—did anything happen?"

"Nothing particular. You wanted to show off your strength and sat down on a chair, telling a couple of French girls to sit on your knees. Then you held your arms out, and two more girls sat on them. . . . A fifth sat on your head."

"On my head?" cried Kouzma. "How disgusting!"

"Then you got up," continued the Count, "and the girls sitting on your knees fell down, and you tried to pick them up.

That made the other three tumble off as well. Then you fell down yourself."

"And was that all?"

"Absolutely all."

"Swear it, Panin!"

"I'm not going to swear for such a trifle. But I'm speaking the truth, on my honor."

Kouzma gave a sigh of relief.

"Thank God! It's so easy to slip when drunk. And I'm a married man!"

XVIII.

On the 19th of March—that is, on the very day when the Russian troops entered Paris—the Emperor Napoleon arrived at Fontainebleau after unsuccessful attempts to help the capital. Without having the state apartments opened, he camped in two or three rooms on the first floor, next to the gallery called after Francis I.

During the evening of the 19th and the morning of the 20th of March, troops which had been concentrated in the Champagne district kept marching into Fontainebleau. Those divisions which had left Paris also came in, using the Essonnes road.

At the Imperial General Headquarters, there assembled the Duc de Conegliano, who had commanded the National Guard in Paris, General Lefebvre, an old man, who considered it is his duty to re-enter the ranks, Marshals Ney, Macdonald, and Oudinot (just arrived from Trois-Berthiers), together with Marshals Mortier and Marmont, who had signed the capitulation of Paris the day before.

The only Minister present was Maret, Duc de Bassano, Minister for Foreign Affairs. Caulaincourt who had gone to negotiate with the Allies, had not yet returned. The remaining Ministers had left for the banks of the Loire with the Empress.

As and when they came in, the troops took up their position on the Essonnes, where Marmont's Headquarters were. Mortier had his at Mennessy.

The most disquieting rumors flew about Fontainebleau. Secrets were no more secrets, and, even before they reached the Emperor, items of news from Paris were bandied about the stairs and corridors of the great Palace, swollen by fearful talk.

The wintry cold of a place long unheated could still be felt in Napoleon's rooms, and was not dispelled by a big fire in the hearth. From the windows the trees of the Park wore a melancholy look, while blue sky and bright sunlight seemed a superfluous and insulting mockery.

All the news that came in was gloomy and hopeless. Caulaincourt had been graciously received by the Emperor Alexander, conversing with him for over an hour, but—the keys of Paris lay on the Russian Emperor's table, a thing that boded no success for Caulaincourt's negotiations. Prince Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Commander-in-Chief, who personally represented his Emperor, insisted that the Allies should negotiate with France direct, no longer recognizing Napoleon. He cited as precedents Lyons and Bordeaux, the former of which had surrendered on the 9th of March, after intimating that it recognized the Bourbons. And the town of Bordeaux had declared likewise without waiting to surrender. . . . Danger reared its head where it was least expected; the nation was troubled in mind. There was neither Government nor police. All could move freely in the streets, and the Royalists took advantage of this fact. Crowds of them, bearing torches, assembled outside Talleyrand's house, where the Russian Emperor was quartered, on the very evening of his entry into Paris with the King of Prussia, and a great manifestation in favor of the Bourbons took place.

Talleyrand had been ordered to accompany the Empress on her journey, instead of which he received the Allies with honors. He was the first turncoat—but how many times had not this ex-bishop already turned traitor? As early as the 20th of March, Talleyrand sat next to Nesselrode at the first sitting of the Allied representatives with Caulaincourt, raising his voice against France and against her Emperor. In Paris, all imprisoned Royalists had been freed by Alexander's order. . . . Finally, and worst of all, notices were posted in Paris to the effect that,

on behalf of the Allies, the Emperor Alexander pledged himself to negotiate neither with Napoleon personally, nor with any members of the Imperial family, concerning the interests of France.

Peace could not be obtained. There remained war.

Napoleon sat for hours over a map, staring at it with dull, tired eyes. That had now come about as to which a faint, obscure presentiment had stabbed his heart before crossing the Niemen.

The memory of Moscow rose in the Emperor's mind. Moscow, that far-off, Asiatic, uncouth Moscow, had known how to meet a conqueror in her own way. But what had Paris done in like case? Napoleon looked down at the round, pinkish spot which represented Paris on his map, and in his mind's eye he saw endless wide boulevards, tall and comfortable houses, theatres, restaurants, and Parisian women, light-minded creatures, ready to love a conqueror, whoever he might be.

Only a few Frenchwomen had met the French troops in Moscow. There no Russian women had sought the favor and good-will of the foreign conquerors. . . . Here, it was said, Parisian women had thrown flowers by the armful at the Emperor Alexander. "They can do that well," thought Napoleon with a curl of the lip"; they have had practice in it! First they threw flowers at Louis XVI, then at the Girondistes, and at bloodthirsty Robespierre; and, later on, at the Directory and at myself. Such are the conquests of the Revolution—this man to-day, that man to-morrow. And what has patriotism to do with it?"

It had been autumn when he had entered Moscow, a city all decked in the golden leafage of her gardens. Days were getting shorter and nights colder, and the Russian winter was coming on. His generals had longed for the shelter of a roof, for comfort, for a warm bed—his troops for a blazing camp fire and the rum barrel. But here spring had come, seemingly the best possible time for soldiering. A bivouac could be no hardship on warm nights like these.

By setting fire to Moscow the Russians had deprived the

exhausted French Army of rest and warm quarters. Was it in their mind, perchance, to set fire to Paris as well?

Rising, the Emperor went over to a window and looked long in the direction of Paris through the trees, as though expecting to see the distant glare of a fire. But there was none—only the sky showed darkly beyond the Park.

Tidings were received that, by order of the Emperor Alexander, the Allied troops had not remained in Paris, where only part of their Guard stayed behind for patrol and guard duties. All the other troops had left the city's walls and were marching in a wide, encircling movement on Fontainebleau. Absolute discipline was maintained in the Paris garrison, of which that stern Sacken had been appointed Governor. Troops doing guard duty were dressed as though for a parade. There was no licentiousness, looting, nor brawling.

Moscow had destroyed the French Army in her Asiatic fashion. Paris might well destroy the Russians in her Parisian way. Let the Russian generals lie warm under the eiderdowns of French "cocottes." . . . But these generals remained in the open, in bivouac. . . . Could it be that Alexander had proved a more long-sighted commander than he, Napoleon?

And so there remained but one way of salvation—the way of victory.

The days went by, and each morning fewer Marshals and Generals appeared at the "lever de l'Empereur." The latter looked at them with a frown.

"Where is Kellerman?" he asked once.

"His wife is ill. . . . He has gone to see her."

"Gone to Paris?"

Silence was the only answer.

All faces wore a gloomy, discontented expression. The interests of all suddenly became centered in Paris. Napoleon's eye roved over his Marshals' uniforms, which he had given these low-born men to wear in order that they might serve him faithfully. It was he who had made them dukes or princes, in order that they might defend him to the end. And now he read the bitter truth in their sullen faces, in their downcast eyes.

They were thinking, he knew, that keeping faith with him meant the risk of losing all. "Over there" traitors were received with open arms. Loyalty to him meant risking their own skin. And so they forsook him—secretly, by night, as thieves slink away. One was summoned to Paris urgently on business. Who dared to summon him, with the Emperor here? Another left so as to look after his Corps, a third to obtain money. It suddenly became necessary for each and all to visit Paris . . . Paris, which was occupied by the enemy. But none of those who went there ever returned.

Napoleon felt himself to be in the position of a chess-player, whose men a clever opponent removes from the board one by one. Soon there would be none left except the king. And after that . . . ?

Check to the king. . . . Check . . . Check . . . Check . . .

There was no way out. Check-mate could not be avoided.

Sleepless, the Emperor pored over his map o'nights. No; it was not true about check-mate. He could yet avoid defeat. He had troops with which to make war: twenty-five thousand of the Old Guard here in Fontainebleau, and with them—Marmont; twenty-five thousand men in Lyons, and eighteen thousand on their way from Italy under General Grenier. Then there were fifteen thousand under Marshal Suchet, and forty thousand under Soult.

All the Allies were weary. They were intoxicated with victory. And had not Moscow demonstrated that the loss of a capital means nothing? He would gather his forces together. would drive out the Allies. A glorious peace would be signed on the banks on the Vistula. It was true that Alexander had crossed the Rhine and occupied Paris—but then had not he, Napoleon, crossed the Niemen and occupied Moscow?

Here an obtrusive thought woke in his mind. Had any of these Russians—Koutouzoff, Barclay de Tolley, Miloradovitch, Rayevsky, or Langeron—been traitors towards the Emperor Alexander? No! They had all been with him before and af-

ter Moscow. The worse things went with Russia, the more closely did these generals cleave to their Sovereign.

There had been displeasure, true,—grumbles at Koutouzoff's slowness, snarls at Barclay de Tolley's German origin. But the banner of these men had yet been followed, and nobody had ever thought of treason.

On horseback, Napoleon inspected his troops. What fine young men they were! The officers knew the same enthusiasm as that which had flamed among his troops in Italy. Were he to start partisan warfare, he would achieve victory with them.

"And yet—and yet!" came again that bitter knowledge which had so tortured him a year ago, during equally sleepless nights at the Tuileries, after his dash back to Paris from distant Russia. There was need of a Bonaparte to lead these troops to victory, and Bonaparte was no more. The Bonaparte of Rivoli and of Arcole had gone; only the Emperor Napoleon remained. He had become accustomed to act, to issue his commands, through his Marshals and Generals; no longer could he, personally, wage partisan warfare. No longer could he spring upon any Arcole bridge, flag in hand. It was too late. . . .

The candles were dying in the work-room, about the open map, and day was replacing night. But even daytime brought no succor. Abdication was demanded of him, in favor of the Empress and the King of Rome. . . . He consented . . . he hesitated anew. He wrote out the deed of abdication, sent it off—then demanded it back. No! he would fight instead. . . . Devil take it! he still had troops.

It was the night of the 24th of March, warm and sweetly odorous, yet with the humidity of spring and a light mist above the tree tops in the Park. . . . There was a late moon, reddish like a thing of copper. . . . Noise of hoofs outside, a noise such as he had heard these many nights. And people going up and down the broad palace stairs, and whispering, till very late —some waiting for news from Paris, others slinking away. . . . Nobody stopped them. It was a case of each man for himself, now.

There came a knock at the door and a page entered the room.

"Colonel Gourgaud has arrived, Your Majesty."

Not later than an hour before, Napoleon had sent the Colonel with an order to the troops. Why had he returned so quickly?

"He may enter."

"Your Majesty—I have just come back from Essonne. . . . I found neither Marshal Marmont nor his Army there."

"Where is he?"

"He has come to an agreement with the enemy. He is in Paris; his troops are already marching through the Russian camps . . . Fontainebleau lies open to the enemy."

"Marmont? . . . Impossible!"

An uneasy, ringing silence fell on the room. The dying candles sputtered in their sockets. Sitting on his bed, Napoleon looked straight ahead with an undeviating stare. Gourgaud stood silent before him, not daring to raise his head. It seemed as though the Emperor saw him not at all.

"Ungrateful man!" said Napoleon at last. "He will be unhappier than I."

The Emperor shut himself up for several hours in his rooms, but at last it became necessary to leave them. He demanded that his written abdication should be returned to him, but was told that it was too late. . . . No matter; he would fight. Too late for that as well, they said. No couriers could be sent to armies scattered all over France: they would everywhere be stopped by the Allies.

"Couriers cannot be sent," said Napoleon. "But if I sent out fifty thousand men, they would not be stopped. Is that not so?"

Save a heavy silence, there was no reply from the Marshals and Generals. They did not seem to understand him. But he understood them very well. They had no wish to fight.

Again the Emperor walked up and down his work-room, all alone and seeking a way out. Had he not often read of great men of antiquity, who had known how to leave this world opportunely. Once upon a time he had had poison prepared for him, wearing its tiny bottle ever since on his neck. He had feared capture then. . . . Well, should he be taken prisoner now . . . he could. . . . Had he not escaped capture by that

Cossack by an inch? It was not a case of captivity just yet—or was it? Was not Fontainebleau equivalent to captivity now? Or even worse—a prison?

They were keeping Russian Easter in Paris just now; the Emperor Alexander was exchanging congratulations with his, Napoleon's, traitorous Marshals. Three nights ago, the Russian troops had sung "Christ is risen"! on the Place de la Concorde. It was well with them—they believed in Christ and He would help them. Napoleon, however, did not believe in Christ, and could hope for no succor from on high

There was alarm in the Palace of Fontainebleau during the night between the 31st of March and the 1st of April. A valet sleeping at the door of the Emperor's bedroom, roused Yvon, the Court physician. Others ran to call Marshal Bertrand, Caulaincourt, and Maret.

"The Emperor has poisoned himself . . . The Emperor is dying."

Through a crack in the door, the valet had seen the Emperor, who had been very agitated the evening before, pour something into a glass, mix it with water, and drink the mixture. Then he had laid down on his bed, but had soon begun to groan and toss about.

On hearing this tale, the doctor went down the stairs, mounted his horse in the courtyard, and galloped away.

The Marshal, Caulaincourt, and Maret, cautiously entered the bedroom, to find the Emperor sleeping peacefully. The sweetish smell of opium hung in the air. They tip-toed out, not daring to wake Napoleon.

Next morning, the Emperor awakened later than usual. He was well in health, but seemed astonished at something. His valet heard him mutter to himself: "Fate does not will it." Then he asked for paper and a pen.

The Emperor's hand flew over the paper; tiny letters were grouped into unintelligible words. At the third line the pen stuck, making a long blot resembling the letter "V." He crossed this out and wrote something above it. The complete document was the final text of his abdication, which had been drafted as

far back as the 25th of March. He read it over and then signed it.

"In view of the fact," it ran, "that the Allied Governments have declared the only obstacle to peace to be the Emperor—the latter, in fidelity to his oath, hereby declares that he renounces the thrones of France and of Italy on behalf of himself and his children, and that there is no sacrifice, even that of his life, which he would not be ready to make for the good of France. . . ."

Now he was the Emperor who had abdicated. He was no more the Emperor.

Trying to get used to this thought was torture. He scarcely left his rooms. There was no longer any "Lever de l'Empereur," since there was no longer any Emperor. Napoleon did not enquire any more as to which general had left and which had remained. What did this matter?

A week went by. At Fontainebleau, day followed day with unexpected and sudden monotony. Napoleon sorted his papers, worked with his secretary Fain, and in the evenings read his favorite ancient authors, in whose works he had so often sought examples and counsel. Once more he read Plutarch and Cornelius Nepos, Julius Caesar and Xenophon.

Yes, all that had been—even as he, Napoleon, had been.

These words had the sound of hammer strokes on a coffin lid.

On the 8th of April, as usual, Napoleon rang for his valet in the morning. Nobody answered the ring, and he rang again. The little brass bell, which had known Jena, Wagram, and Austerlitz, tinkled loudly from his bedroom. Then a pale, confused page came in.

"Why doesn't Constant answer my ring?"

"He isn't there," said the youth, hanging his head.

"And Roustam the Mameluke? Is he not in the next room?" There was a long, heavy silence. Then the page replied, in an almost inaudible whisper:

"They have both run away in the night."

"Roustam ran away?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Very well. Ask Monsieur Fain to send me some coffee, and then you may go. I shall dress myself."

It was but a drop, but—who knows—perhaps the bitterest drop in that cup of woe which had now to be drunk. It became finally, and very clearly, obvious that he was no longer Emperor, no longer Napoleon, no longer even Bonaparte. . . . He was simply superfluous; an old man whom nobody wanted.

XIX.

DURING these very days, when life was gradually dying away in silent and emptying Fontainebleau, it throbbed and pulsed in Paris, which was preparing to keep Easter Sunday in the Orthodox way.

On the Place de la Concorde, at the spot where once upon a time had stood a scaffold with the guillotine which had beheaded King Louis and Queen Marie-Antoinette, and where thousands of people had been executed whose only fault had been that they were the offspring of their parents and had been loyal to their duty—Russian carpenters had now erected a big wooden platform, upon which the large church-tent had been set up.

All around it rose tall masts decorated with green garlands.

On Easter morning, the Avenue des Champs Elysées and the entire Place de la Concorde were filled with Russian regiments of the Guard. . . . At eleven o'clock, the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia mounted their horses and rode up to the Place de l'Etoile, where stood the Triumphal Arch, followed by Russian, Prussian, Austrian and French generals. Thence he galloped down the Avenue des Champs Elysées to the Place de la Concorde and dismounted before the church-tent.

The clergy in white Easter vestments, and the numerous Court choir in dark violet kaftans with thrown-back sleeves, were waiting for him there.

Small, transparent, rosy clouds floated along the sky, which was of a tender blue. The sun shone vividly on the vestments of priests and deacons, on the helmets of the Grenadiers, the

gilded metal plates, and on the bayonets of innumerable muskets. Crowds of people thronged on the Place de la Concorde and in the Avenue des Champs Elysées. People hung in live bunches on the trees and the railings of the Tuileries Gardens and stood on the roof of the huge, windowless building of the Garde-Meuble.

Those who had come by special invitation stood on the platform beside the church-tent. Among them were the Marquis de Choisy and Yvonne. Standing on tip-toe, the old Marquis peeped with curiosity into the tent, where many candles burned in the golden twilight.

When the Emperor dismounted before the church, a solemn silence fell on the large square surrounded by troops. The far reaching, loud voices of the general commanding the parade was heard:

"Parade! . . . Off with your shakoes, caps, and helmets! . . . Prepare for prayer!"

Silence again, and then came the soft bass of the deacon from the tent. The priest answered him, and the choir began to sing.

The Marquis de Choisy looked around him with astonishment. In the days of the Imperial grandeur of Napoleonic parades, in the days of the studied elegance of ancient Royal festivities, he had never yet seen such incomparable beauty as that offered by the sight which now opened before his eyes.

Ten paces away from the Marquis, and from the edge of the platform, stood the right flank of the Preobrajensky Regiment. The Marquis saw the distinctly drawn out line of similar white musket-straps, and the equally even line of white aigrettes on the shakoes which each soldier held in his left hand. Occasionally, here and there, right hands were lifted and heads were bent, showing the backs of gray, black or auburn hair. The men crossed themselves, and this movement did not break the monotony of their ranks, but seemed to underline it yet more.

The Marquis listened to the singing of the choir. The sopranos trilled like nightingales, and the bass-voices hummed softly and ponderously. . . . There was something quite special

in this church-parade, something unlike the many parades and ceremonies the Marquis had seen in the course of his long life.

It seemed as though sky and earth blended without outshining each other.

In the old times of the King, on the Place du Carrousel, in all the splendor of horsemen and horse-women, only one sun shone for all, in the person of the King. Later on, at the solemn services in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, all the glitter was concentrated in the Emperor alone. All that was divine and human blended in him, and there was nobody beside him.

It was different to-day. The sun remained in the sky, sending down his rays upon the earth. But it seemed as though, together with these golden rays, angels were flying down and singing, their voices mingling with human voices.

The divine service went on slowly and solemnly. The Marquis, who was unaccustomed to stand on his feet for so long, felt that they ached and hurt him.

At last, the clergy came out of the church-tent.

On the Quay of the Seine, a gun peeled out a blank-shot, which echoed around, and was followed by blank discharges of musketry-fire echoing softly against the walls of the houses. Church-bells rang from all sides, there came from afar the familiar, heavy peal of the great bell of Notre-Dame, and the Russian choiristers, unfolding their music, began to sing something solemn and at the same time so touching, that the old Marquis felt tears mounting to his eyes, and, taking his pocket-handkerchief from the tail of his gold-embroidered coat, imperceptibly wiped them.

"So that is it," thought Kouzma as he listened to the prayer which seemed to flow smoothly, as though coming down from Heaven. "So that is what I have been trying for so long to comprehend with my feeble intellect, without being able to understand it. That is why we are in Paris, and the sun is shining so softly above us, and the bayonets which but yesterday seemed to be rusty from blood, are now sparkling so gaily in its rays."

Kouzma stood listening attentively to the words and sounds of the prayer.

Tender, almost women-like sopranos began to sing. It was Russia herself, a thoughtful, indescribably beautiful woman, who was singing. For Kouzma, these sounds contained the image of his distant, beloved Nadenka, and the vague, unpalpable memory of his mother, who had died so young, he hardly remembered her. He was quite a child at the time of her death. But Mother-Russia had remained, and now her voice sounded in his ears, tender but distinct, with a silvery sound.

"God is with us. Comprehend this, O nations, and submit, for God is with us!" [40]

Russia's silvery soprano had sounded, and now came masculine bass, barytone, and tenor voices—the voices of the Russian Army, in restrained, yet powerful tones:

"God is with us!"

It seemed to Kouzma that they were the voices of those who had been buried in the hastily dug common graves during the campaign. . . . And of those, who had been buried in the night of the 19th of March on the yellow sandy heights of Montmartre. . . . And his brother Vania's voice, over whose cold and bloodstained corpse his old father had wept with such strange, gutteral sounds. . . . And his father's itself, who lay buried in the monastery graveyard in Moscow.

"You will hear it in the farthermost lands: 'God is with us!'"

The Russian warriors had reached the "farthermost lands" indeed. They had marched over thousands of miles to hear, now, the soft boom of their guns reverberate in the greenish-blue waves of the Seine, and the echo of these salutes tremble joyfully above the French capital.

"And if you could fight again, you would be conquered once more, for God is with us!"

"No . . . They will not be able to fight any more. The power of Antichrist is broken forever," thought Kouzma, looking with eyes full of enthusiasm at the Emperor. "God Him-

[40] This is even now sung yearly in church in commemoration of Alexander's victory over Napoleon and those who went to war with him against Russia.

self is with you. God Himself watches over you and sends you His blessing. . . ."

And the choir sang solemnly:

"God is mighty, He is the Sovereign of the world and the Peaceholder. And God is with us!"

XX.

On the 13th of June, the Emperor Alexander, at the head of part of his Guard, returned to St. Petersburg from his victorious campaign. Near the Narva Gate, to which old Minaieff and his sons had driven up fourteen years earlier, and where a small, humble watch-house and striped turnpike had stood—there now rose an incompleted Triumphal Arch, still surrounded by scaffolding. It was a copy of that gate of Paris through which the Russian troops had entered the city. Here, or along the dusty road, or beside the wooden "datchas" to which leafy birches gave a shade, all Petersburg had assembled since morning, waiting for the Emperor and his troops.

Maria Alexéevna and Nadenka, accompanied by Dournoff, Kozodéeff and Fofo, had found an excellent place near the arch itself for their big coach with its postillon and team of four gray horses. Around them and as far as the eye could reach, surged a countless multitude, while the arch and its scaffolding were covered with a swarm of people in brightly colored holiday attire.

At Nadenka's feet was a basket full of fresh flowers and laurel wreaths. She had also brought her work-basket, heaped with red roses for the Cossack Life-Guards.

Fofo was full of joyous animation. He recited some verses which were to be read at the theatre in the presence of the Emperor.

"The flags of Moscow's brave avengers,
Are waving over the proud Seine . . ."

Nadenka did not listen to him. She was deeply immersed in thought. How had she managed to live during these two hopelessly cheerless and solitary years? Had it not been for little Vania, she would not have been able to remain alive. During these two years, she had grown, from a delicate, worldly Petersburg young girl, obedient in all to her mother, into a woman, a wife and a mother herself. From the few letters of her friends and acquaintances, and his own still fewer letters, from the obscure and declamatory reports she read in the "St. Petersburg News," she had gleaned what she could about her Kouzma.

She was proud of the Life-Guards Cossacks' feat near Leipzig. Her Kouzma had distinguished himself at that battle. She wept as she read about his having been awarded the Cross of St. George "for having been the first to hew his way into the ranks of the enemy Cuirassiers" and "having killed one of their senior officers with his own hand." She fondly imagined that he must have been present, too, at the attack near Fère-Champenoise, and must have ridden with the Emperor into the French square. . . . Suddenly, she read his name in the list of "wounded and missing."

She would never be able to forget those dreadful days. It was still winter in St. Petersburg. The snow-covered streets were full of pits and holes. A fog hung low above the city. The gray sky hid the distances in yellow mist. The Neva lay like a cold corpse under its snowy shroud. The Lent church bells sounded like funeral bells. Nadenka, dressed all in black, went with Niania Matvéevna to all the offices at the church of *Nikola Morskov.*[41] She could not bring herself to pray for him as one dead, she prayed for him as though he were alive. She knelt on the cold stone flags of the church, bowing low to the ground when the priest prayed for "those who were prisoners of war."

Towards spring, when black open spaces had already appeared on the ice on the Neva, and the ice-carriers were already hurrying to bring ashore large, greenish-crystal blocks of ice, a letter came from Evgueny. He wrote to their mother, that

[41] "Nicholas of the Sea."

he had heard from a certain sailor Gordienko about Kouzma having attempted to capture Napoleon himself in the night near Brienne. The attack had been repulsed, but Kouzma had remained on the spot, wounded. He had probably been either killed or made prisoner of war.

Nadenka recollected how Kouzma had described his brother Vania's and his father's death on the battlefield in his letters to her, and she wept bitterly. "He is certainly dead," she thought.

A feeling of complete and endless solitude had overcome her, and she had never more been able to get rid of it. "Of course he was killed there and then, on the spot," she thought. "Only a miracle could have saved him."

And, hardly daring to hope, Nadenka helplessly and passionately prayed God for a miracle.

On the 8th day of April, old Prince Kourakin came to them straight from the Palace and said to Maria Alexéevna in a trembling voice:

"Her Majesty the Empress Maria Fedorovna has deigned to inform me, that the Emperor entered Paris on the 19th of March at the head of the Allied troops. General Koutouzoff, who was dispatched from Paris itself to St. Petersburg, was delayed on his journey, and sent a courier in advance to the Empress, so as to inform her without delay of this happy news."

Nadenka remembered that day well. The Prince was wearing a violet coat with diamond buttons. He was accompanied by two lacqueys in gold-embroidered liveries. He was going to take the Empress to the church of "All the Afflicted," where a Te Deum was to be celebrated.

That very same day, in the evening, the sailor Gordienko, who had lost an arm in the battle, and had been sent home with other invalids, suddenly came to see her. He assured her that Kouzma was alive, but probably a prisoner of war.

Three days later, General Koutouzoff arrived in St. Petersburg and immediately sent her with a courier a letter from Kouzma himself from Paris.

Nadenka seized the precious letter and locked herself in her bedroom. Vania sat down at her feet. He pulled the lace flounces of her dress and kept asking her something in his funny

childish babble. But Nadenka did not hear anything. She read, over and over again, the slanting lines written in Kouzma's large handwriting. Her face was smiling. Dimples trembled on her pink cheeks, and tears came falling, one by one, out of her large eyes on the thin Parisian paper, smearing it with big ink spots. Sheet after sheet, Nadenka read about the hunger Kouzma had suffered from, about the stranger girl who had saved him, the taking of Montmartre, the troops' entry into Paris, the bathing of the Cossacks in the Seine. . . . She read, and hardly understood what she was reading. The letters danced before her eyes.

"Kouzma is alive! Kouzma is alive!" . . . Her heart was singing. She had never yet loved him as she loved him now. He would come back to her . . . a hero . . . With the Cross of St. George. . . . Wounded in the temple . . . How she would kiss that wound!

Now time did not drag on slowly and wearily, with nothing but daily cares to relieve it. There was such light and happiness in front of her, that all her sufferings and agony, all her tortures and melancholy thoughts were at once forgotten and receded into the past. Nadenka, who had grown thin and pale, now bloomed anew during these summer months. Her blue eyes seemed to have become of a deeper blue, and a rosy, transparent down covered her cheeks.

"You look like a peach," said Dournoff. She only smiled and lowered her eyelashes.

. . . "What is our young beauty dreaming about?" now said Dournoff, who sat opposite her in the carriage, taking her hand in his own. "The Emperor will be here in a moment."

Nadenka started. An immense cheer had gone up in the distance, beyond a thicket of birches.

Accompanied by Prince Wolkonsky, the Emperor Alexander drove quickly by in a barouche, bombarded with flowers. Then about an hour passed. The troops which had awaited and welcomed the Emperor near the station of "Four Hands," were now marching through the gates.

Amid cheers, amid the waving of thousands of handkerchiefs

and hats and a rain of flowers, all lighted up by bright sunshine, Nadenka first saw a gigantic drum-major advance, his wide chest a mass of silver braid, a huge shako on his head. Turning now to the right and now to the left, and anon facing the drummers, he marched along, twirling a heavy, tasseled staff skilfully above his head. Every now and then, to the delight of the crowd, he would toss the great metal thing into the air and catch it again. Behind him, with a brave rattle and roll, came a golden line of drums. When they fell silent, the band played a marching tune.

The first companies of the Guards regiments were now passing Nadenka. They had flowers stuck on their bayonets and through the straps of their wide white bandoleers. Laurel wreaths crowned their shakoes or metal helmets.

The leader of the Izmailovsky regimental singers passed in his turn—huge, with a roguish, smiling face, ginger hair, and white eye-brows and lashes. He winked gaily at Nadenka, who stood on the seat of the coach throwing flowers, thrust two fingers into his mouth, whistled shrilly and turned to his company. Then, flinging a couple of wooden spoons into the air and catching them as they fell, he clicked them together like castanets, and broke into a song in praise of Koutouzoff. The entire company roared its chorus.

Red, sunburned, dusty, gay faces passed before Nadenka. Suddenly, the Cossack Life-Guards came in sight. Tall Efremoff, on a bay horse, was the first Nadenka saw. Behind him rode Roubashkin, and in the latter's wake the smart regimental singers whistled and sang.

Nadenka opened the door of the coach, and, still holding her little basket with its freight of red roses, sprang to the ground and ran up to offer Efremoff some of them.

"Ivan Efremovitch," she said. "Where is Kouzma?"

Efremoff bent his simple, sunburned, rather common-looking face down to Nadenka. A white cross—the reward of gallantry at Leipzig—glittered at his neck. The moustache that hid his lips lifted in a shy smile.

"Kouzma Minaieff has been sent straight to the Don with his Cossacks. . . . They'll arrive there in September."

"Won't he be coming here?"

"Here? Well— if strings were pulled, perhaps. But not for three years according to regulations."

It seemed to Nadenka as though, without warning, the sun had gone out. Mechanically she went on distributing flowers to the Cossacks, on whose lances red roses suddenly bloomed.

"Maman," said Nadenka sorrowfully on returning to the coach. "Kouzma has been sent straight to the Don country. He'll arrive there in September, but won't come here for another three years. What shall I do? Wait again? No! I can't wait any longer."

At a foot pace, their coach was following in the wake of the troops. After a moment's silence, quick-witted old Kozodéeff found a solution for Nadenka's problem.

"Well, my dear, I think the question is a simple one. If the mountain cannot come to Mahomet, then Mahomet must go to the mountain. I shall be sending to the Don country this week, for wheat and horses. All things you might want there, in Kouzma's stanitza,—bedroom furniture, curtains, your clavichord and your icons, all you might need to make the house comfortable—could go by wagon at the same time. . . . And then you and the boy can go later, in a chaise. One can live in a stanitza as well as in town. You'll meet your husband on his arrival there, and live there with him till further orders. I don't imagine that Stepan Fedorovitch will grudge you the loan of his horses."

"Pray count on me," said Dournoff kindly, kissing Nadenka's hand.

Maria Alexéevna compressed her lips angrily. Nadenka was silent, but looked gratefully at Kozodéeff and at Dournoff. Meanwhile Fofo, with a pink spot on each of his pale cheeks, continued to pour out his patriotic enthusiasm, singing out of tune:

"You have come back,
O blessed Monarch. . . ."

"Do you know," he said, turning to Dournoff, "what the French poet Delille wrote to the Emperor Alexander in Paris:

"Sur le front de Louis tu mettras la couronne.
Le septre le plus beau est celui que l'on donne." [42]

XXI.

APPROXIMATELY two months before the Emperor Alexander's return to St. Petersburg, he held a farewell reception in Paris at the Elysée Palace, whither he had moved from Tallyrand's house soon after Easter. . . . Those received were Ataman Platoff, General Ilovaisky (12th), and the Cossack officers who would be taking their discharged troopers home to the Don. Kouzma was one of those presented.

Platoff, who had just returned from London, which he had visited by special invitation of the English authorities, stopped in front of Ilovaisky, gave him a slap on the shoulder and, looking up to the tall, ruddy-cheeked general, said:

"Look here, my dear fellow. Will you be a true friend, and help my Englishwoman to get to Tcherkassk in her own private coach?"

"It is true, then, Your High Excellency," said the Aide-de-Camp on duty, "that you have brought an Englishwoman from London with you?"

Platoff glanced at him with his lively, round gray eyes, and said:

"Don't you go and imagine anything. People are laughing at me as it is. 'When the beard goes gray, the devil enters into you,' [43] they say. But that's all sheer nonsense. The Englishwoman is not for me, but to teach my daughters and grandchildren foreign languages and good manners and deportment. Now that I have been made a Count, they will have to appear in the highest circles of society, so they must show off to their advantage. . . ."

The Master of Ceremonies who stood near the door knocked

[42] "You will place the crown on Louis' forehead.
The best sceptre is that which you give to another."
[43] A Russian saying.

the floor with his staff. Platoff took his place at the flank of those who were to be presented and stood at attention, holding his shako in his left hand.

The Emperor came in.

Alexander looked pale and tired. The quarrels and bickerings concerning Napoleon's succession after his abdication, had fatigued the Russian Sovereign very much. Those whom he had come to love with a tender and confident love, had proved to be greedy, mean-spirited, and heartless. However, all the main points had been decided. King Louis XVIII was expected in Paris, and it was time for Alexander to leave.

On seeing Ataman Platoff, the Emperor Alexander gave him one of his usual enchanting smiles. He listened to the Ataman's report about the condition of the Don regiments, shook hands with him and went up to tall, handsome Ilovaisky.

The stalwart, young-looking general with a fluffy moustache slightly streaked with gray, which met his whiskers, wearing a uniform with a high, silver-embroidered collar coming up to his cheeks, looked at the Emperor with that special reverent expression which all wore who seldom had the occasion to see the Emperor close, and spoke in the low, restrained voice in which one speaks in church:

"I am General Ilovaisky 12th. I have the honor to present myself to Your Imperial Majesty before leaving for the Don."

"You may be Ilovaisky 12th," said Alexander, smiling, "But you are not 'any' Ilovaisky. You were the last to leave Moscow—and the first to enter Paris."

Alexander made the round of the officers. He looked kindly and attentively at Kouzma, and said:

"Where did you get that scar, my brave fellow?"

"Near Brienne, Your Imperial Majesty," replied Kouzma in a loud and distinct voice.

"You may remember, Your Majesty," said Platoff, "that I reported to you about my Cossacks having almost captured Bonaparte himself. This is the young fellow I told your Majesty about."

"Thank you," said the Emperor. "This is an honorable wound. I envy you."

Then, looking at Platoff and addressing all who were present, Alexander said:

"You are all going home . . . to the Don . . ."

The Emperor's voice shook slightly.

"Give my greeting to the Quiet Don. Return peacefully to your hearths. The feats that you have achieved in the war which has just come to an end, are innumerable. They will be rewarded by me and by your country and will be duly glorified by posterity. . . . They will not be forgotten in Russia, nor on the Don. And if there comes a time when a new danger threatens Russia, your sons will remember the actions of their fathers and will follow their example."

An old captain of the Cossacks was sobbing aloud. Big tears fell from his beard on his dark-blue uniform, making black spots on it. Kouzma's head was swimming. The tension of his whole being, the happiness which pervaded it, made him feel as though he were about to faint.

The Emperor bent his head. The officers simultaneously clicked their spurs.

"Remain in good health, Your Imperial Majesty," came in answer to his bow.

The Emperor left the room.

Next day, the departing Cossacks assembled in a noisy, dirty, and dusty street of the Parisian faubourg of Saint Martin, among them Kouzma's detachment from the Champs Elysée.

Rain water lay in the deep, muddy ruts. Pigs wallowed among the dark puddles in the gutter at the side of the road, while in the middle of it, where stone paving made it higher, dust already lay thick. The wind lifted it in little whorls, and bore it along the street. Bits of straw, torn paper, chips of wood, and dirty rag, lay about everywhere. Heavily loaded Cossack wagons stood before most of the houses. In front of a small hotel waited a coach with a team of four horses, and Platoff's

A.D.C. was carefully helping the Ataman's Englishwoman—an elderly, yellow-faced, dry woman in a straw hat with a green veil—to get into it.

In the open, an old priest in faded vestments held the service for the travellers, then walked up and down the Cossack ranks to sprinkle the men with holy water. Their horses eyed him distrustfully, tossing their heads. Then . . . no word of command was given, somebody just said: "God speed" . . . and the cavalcade moved off. The street echoed with loud song and the click of hoofs upon stones.

Kouzma glanced back. Through its haze of dust, Paris looked unreal. The gates of Saint Martin showed black against dark, crenellated walls. Intangible sadness seemed to fill the summer sky above the endless city—the capital of the world—which Kouzma left without regret. Fair it was and holding many wonders, but alien.

His land, his own dear country, lay ahead.

The red roofs of the last houses flamed beneath a high sun. Then came fields, where rye in bloom dipped and bent, silvery waves passing over it with the breeze. The long line of Cossacks wound ahead, the tips of their lances glittering through a haze of dust. Their horses trampled in seeming haste. In the distance the noise of a great city grew fainter and yet more faint, and then ceased to be heard altogether.

When they halted for the night and the warm summer dark came down, only a quivering golden cloud showed where Paris lay in the distance.

They went slowly, doing a prescribed number of miles a day along a prescribed route, halting and resting often. There was no need for haste, since their work was done. They were going home, and only their hearts hastened on the way. But he who had drawn up the line of route did not have human hearts in mind, only the maintenance of good order and the saving of horses' strength, and the care of equipment and outfit. He must have taken as his motto that piece of ancient wisdom which says: "More haste, less speed."

Kouzma looked enviously at couriers and express messengers who, overhauling the Cossack columns easily in their swift "troikas," shouted to them to make way.

The cart would flash by, jolting and clattering, its Russian driver letting the German horses feel the whip. There would be a glimpse of some man, wearing shako and gray coat white with dust, who sat holding on with both hands; then the shout of: "Hi! Out of the way, Cossacks!" and the "troika" would be nothing but a cloud of dust on the horizon.

"Lucky man! He'll be in Petersburg in a fortnight."

In the slow sameness of a march which seemed to have no end, in the constant succession of night quarters, bivouacs, inns, villages, towns, and kingdoms, the distant image of Nadenka rose ever more clearly before Kouzma's mental vision, and it irked him more and more to think that, on arrival in the Don country, he would have to waste at least a fortnight on all kinds of formalities, and yet another fortnight on riding post to St. Petersburg.

"I'll be allowed to go, of course," he thought. "They won't make me stay on the Don for three years. But it will all take time."

And another matter troubled him—the knowledge that no home awaited him in St. Petersburg. He would have to look for a house and arrange for its furnishing, in the meanwhile living at his mother-in-law's in Dournoff's house.

The only things that Kouzma now required were peace and quiet.

XXII.

THEY crossed the Russian frontier, and after that, days went by more quickly. And then came the Cossack country—the land of the Don.

Down from their saddles jumped the Cossacks, kneeling to kiss their native soil, which smelled of thyme and wormwood. Then, one by one, they dispersed along field and road that led to their native villages.

Eighteen Cossacks were with him when Kouzma neared the stanitza where he was born. But nothing there remained for him as it had been. His father lay buried at the Novodevitchy monastery in Moscow, his mother at the Ogloblins' estate of Stolpiaguy, his brother Ivan on the field near Mir. Even his father's house would be shut up, and Liouba's father, their village priest, would have to take the wanderer in. Later on, Kouzma would return to St. Petersburg.

Nevertheless, his heart beat quickly when first the tall oaks and poplar trees surrounding the *levada* [44] showed on the edge of the tawny-yellow steppe, when his eye caught sight of the chalky slope of the river bank, of the steely glint of Don waters.

Kouzma's horse moved faster. Lance in hand, old Platonytch the sergeant edged his own beast nearer to Kouzma, and began to speak about hunting with great animation, but his words might have been spoken to the wind . . .

"What *is* he talking about?" thought Kouzma. "Great God! There's our new, low white church which Father built. . . . And those 'hatas' on the bank of the Don . . . they are the 'hatas' of the Veshenskaya. We are coming up to the ferry, and from there Father's house will be seen . . . It is probably shut up . . . I wonder if Father's hollyhocks are still alive, which he planted under the windows, and the periwinkle which climbed along the window-frames? But no, how could they be?"

The road descended to the valley, and the Veshenskaya stanitza became invisible for a while.

Kouzma's heart beat faster still. He put his hand to it, as though wishing to stop its pulsations. A bitter thought flashed through his mind: "All have someone to meet them. But I have no one. . . . And my father's house is probably shut up. . . . I shall have to ask strange people to take me in on my own native soil."

The Cossacks rode down to the ferry, whence the Veshenskaya was plainly seen, its levada and church to the right, its houses and gardens following the steep river bank.

Highest of all and flooded with sunlight, Kouzma saw his father's house. He saw it, but could not believe his eyes.

[44] Large enclosure for horses to graze in the steppe.

Shutters were up everywhere, smart in their fresh green paint. Flower-beds glowed beneath the windows, at which muslin curtains hung.

"It's like a dream!" thought Kouzma. "Who on earth can be in the house?"

Men and women were running to the river bank. There came the ragged, welcoming discharge of musketry. The whole stanitza hummed with life; folk poured out of all the houses. The bright skirts and jackets of the white-kerchiefed women were like a flame about them.

Kouzma stared yet again at his father's house, and could not understand what had happened. Ah! see there! His heart missed a beat and then raced in unexplained emotion.

The gates of the familiar house had been flung wide open; and about them stood people he knew—their priest, Father Preobrajensky, and his wife, and Liouba near them. And . . . and . . . who was she who stood next to Liouba? She who wore a dark-blue *koubeliek*,[45] ornamented with real pearls after the ancient fashion? And who was that tiny boy in a red shirt beside her? Oh, God! could it really be. . .?

The great church bell clanged loudly from its steeple, the notes of smaller bells rippling after it. One joyous peal followed another along the Don and across the steppe.

"Your lance, Ivanytch—take your lance!" cried old Platonytch, pushing a heavy red staff into Kouzma's hand. "Don't forget our ancient custom . . . do as your fathers did. Your wife takes the horse's bridle, your son the lance."

Kouzma grasped the lance. It shook as it had never done in his strong hand. As he rode through the gate, the tiny boy in dark-blue trousers, red shirt, and shiny high boots, caught hold of Nadenka's skirt in a fright. He felt rather scared of that "uncle" on horseback.

"Take father's lance, little Vania," said black-robed Liouba. She seized the boy's small paws, laid them about the red lance, and grasped it so.

[45] Long tight-fitting dress worn by Cossack women.

Nadenka (whoever had taught her this?) took hold of the horse's bridle in her right hand, holding the stirrup with her left as he dismounted. Kouzma stooped for Father Ioann's [46] blessing. Scarcely had he turned back when tender hands were laid on his shoulders, and a pair of enormous, dark-blue, shining eyes looked into his.

This was happiness.

"Just look at Vania. . . . What do you think of him?"

No; it was no good! Kouzma still found it impossible to grasp it. . . .

All around him was shining cleanliness, and peace, and comfort. Long strips of carpet lay on the waxed floors, a clean, embroidered cloth covered the table. His father's old, copper samovar was boiling on it. And there was no end to the good things with which the table was loaded.

Through the windows floated a gay noise and chatter from the stanitza, and the loud, unceasing peal of church bells.

When they had been left alone, Kouzma looked long into Nadenka's eyes. "Can it really be that she is my wife?" he asked himself. A thousand words clamored for utterance in his brain, but his lips could not speak them aloud.

Nadenka's eyes fell beneath her husband's gaze. She had got so used to calling him husband in her thoughts, and had known him as husband so little. A shame flushed her cheeks, her eyes seemed to become more intensely blue. She longed to say something important . . . something that had to be said . . . yet hardly dared to open her lips. And so she sought to prolong these first shy moments.

"There are going to be three weddings in St. Petersburg," she said.

Kouzma was silent.

"Fofo is going to marry Annette Bolkonsky. Just so that you might no longer be jealous."

Mischievous dimples showed about Nadenka's lips.

[46] "Father John's."

"And what about Evreinoff, who was in love with her?" asked Kouzma.

"Haven't you heard? He was killed at the battle of Kulm."

"Who else is going to be married?"

"Our Evgueny."

"You don't say so? To whom?"

"It's a frightfully romantical story. She's the daughter of Captain Kolomyitzeff, whom Jenia had that funny name of 'Bless you!' for, you remember. She was engaged to Stolnikoff. You remember him, of course?"

"I should think so! The first fellow with whom I came to blows for your sake, at the Naval Corps. I think I recollect hearing that he had a leg amputated?"

"Yes, and died soon afterwards. . . . And he left his future bride to Jenia."

"Evgueny is getting married under a last will and testament? Well, that's a queer thing."

"Everything turned out so strangely. Jenia did not even want to go to Cronstadt. I had to persuade him. . . . Off he went at last, and returned from there more thoughtful and gentle than I had seen him for a long time. And he often went to Cronstadt after that. Just before I left Petersburg, he came to me and said: 'You know, Nadia, that girl has so much beauty of the spirit that I'm going to marry her.'"

"I can just imagine what maman said when she heard? Why, she never dreamed of any-one lower than a countess or a princess for Evgueny."

"Do you know, Kouzma, she didn't say a word against the match. As a matter of fact, her thoughts were elsewhere. . . . And now you must guess whose the third wedding will be? No! You'll never guess."

"The wedding of maman herself, eh?"

"Yes!" Those mischievous dimples played about Nadenka's cheeks again, and this time it was more than a man could do not to kiss them. "Yes, she is marrying Stepan Fedorovitch. To tell the truth, she should have done so long ago. . . . He has loved her so devotedly."

Nadenka hid her face on Kouzma's breast.

"Tell me about Prince Tiumen," she said.

"He has married a Frenchwoman. It was Count Panin told me, when he ran against me in Lvov."

"Wonders will never cease!"

A long silence fell, then Nadenka spoke once more:

"Now peace has come, Kouzma—the peace we have waited for so long! And all the dreadful things are over. . . . Now, they say, there is going to be a new Russia. Do you think so?"

Strong arms held Nadenka tight. Deep eyes looked into her very soul, and it was indescribably sweet to know that their happiness came from her.

The St. George's Cross on Kouzma's jacket, which had turned edge-wise, dug against her chest. Gently she turned it, and, bending her head, kissed its white enamelled surface.

And Kouzma said softly:

"The old Russia is good enough for me, so long as God is with us."

THE END.